

THE
WORKS

OF THE

RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD

WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.

LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.

THE
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OF THE
RIGHT REVEREND FATHER IN GOD
WILLIAM BEVERIDGE, D. D.
LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH.
CONTAINING ALL HIS
SERMONS,
AS WELL THOSE PUBLISHED BY HIMSELF, AS THOSE SINCE HIS DEATH.
WITH A PREFACE,
Giving some account of the Author and his Writings;
A TABLE OF THE TEXTS OF SCRIPTURE
OCCASIONALLY EXPLAINED;
AND AN
Alphabetical Index
TO THE WHOLE.

A NEW EDITION, IN SIX VOLUMES.

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S E R M O N LII.

THE ONE THING NEEDFUL.

LUKE x. 42.

But one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, that shall not be taken away from her

ALTHOUGH a man of any religion, or of no religion, may come to hear a sermon, so that we cannot discern by that whether he be a Jew, a Turk, an Heathen, or a Christian : yet from your presence here at this time, and especially from your coming to worship God, and to pray to him in the name of Christ, as well as to hear his word, I cannot but in charity believe that you are all Christians ; that you were not only once baptized into Christ, and so made his disciples, but that you still continue to be so, looking upon him as your Lord and only Saviour, and upon yourselves as bound, both in interest and duty, to believe what he hath taught, and to do what he hath commanded, that ye may be saved. And verily, you have infinite cause to rejoice and give thanks to God, that you are brought into a state of salvation, and are as yet capable of obtaining it ; capable of being made all glorified saints in heaven, equal to the holy angels themselves in purity, happiness, and glory.

Neither can any of you fail of it, but such only as are first failing to themselves in looking after it. But such, I fear, are the most here present. And therefore see-

ing you are present here, give me leave to deal plainly and faithfully with you, as becomes a minister of Christ, and to advise you in his name to take care of yourselves, and to mind your eternal good and welfare better than you have hitherto done it.

It is true, I cannot expect to be so happy, as to prevail with ail to do it: most people's hearts being so wholly set upon the present, that they have little regard to their future state, or to any thing that can be said concerning it. However, I must do my duty, and leave the issue to God, who hath the hearts of all men in his hand, and yours particularly who are now before him. And it will be worth the while to say all I can, though but one of you shall be persuaded by all I say; and God's blessing upon it, to mind the one thing necessary for the future, above all things else.

For this purpose therefore I have chosen these words that I have now read, to explain unto you the words of our blessed Saviour, spoken upon this remarkable occasion. As he went about doing good, he came to a village near Jerusalem, called Bethany, where a brother and two sisters lived together. The brother's name was Lazarus; the sisters, Martha and Mary, who were all so truly pious and virtuous, that our Lord had a particular kindness for them. For it is written, *Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus;* John xi. 5. How happy should we think ourselves, how happy should we be, if the same could be written or said of us, that Jesus loves us! Well, let us but be such as they were, and we need not doubt but Jesus will love us as he did them.

Our Lord being come to the village where these his faithful and beloved disciples dwelt, Martha, being the housekeeper, invited and received him into her house, ver 38. And being extremely pleased that she had got so divine a guest in her house, as she well might, she was very busy in providing a suitable entertainment for him, while her sister Mary, in the mean time, sat at

Jesus's feet, and heard his word, ver 39. He was, it seems, no sooner come into their house, but he feasted them with better food than they could prepare for him ; for he entertained them with heavenly food, the bread of life ; taking that as he did all occasions of discoursing to them that were about him of the things that belonged to their everlasting peace. All the while that our Saviour was thus speaking, Mary, in an humble and devout posture, sat at his feet, (as scholars then used to sit at the feet of their masters, Acts xxii. 3.) wholly intent upon what he said, catching at every word that came from him, and laying it up in her heart, for her spiritual edification and comfort. But Martha, having more business upon that extraordinary occasion than she could well turn her hand to, wondered that our Lord should take no more care of her, but suffer her sister to sit there, and leave her to serve alone. And therefore desired him to bid her come and help her, ver. 40. *But Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things : but one thing is needful : and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her*

He knew that Martha had now a great deal of care and trouble upon her, and that it was all for his sake, to entertain and serve him ; yet nevertheless he lets her know, that he preferred Mary's taking care of her own soul, before her taking care of his body ; and therefore that Mary should not leave hearing him to help her, no, though it was to prepare an entertainment for himself. Such a mighty value doth he set upon the souls of mankind, which he came to save. He came on purpose to save them, and therefore preferred their salvation before his necessary food, yea, before his very life ; for that also he laid down to save them.

But then, according to his usual custom of taking all opportunities of saying or doing something that might be of general use and benefit to mankind, from Martha's

being careful and troubled about many things, he takes occasion to put her and all mankind in mind of the one thing needful: and that we may know what that one thing is, he points at it, by saying, that Mary had chosen that good part: and to encourage us all to follow her example in choosing the same, he adds, *that it shall not be taken away from her.*

But, saith he, *there is need of one thing*, or, as we translate it, *one thing is needful.* Generally needful for all men, for all in man, in all respects, and at all times. There are several things which are needful at some time, and upon some particular occasions, as meat, drink, and clothing, of which our Saviour saith to his disciples, *Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things*, Matt. vi. 32. But these things are needful only for the body, and that too in this life only. But in my text he speaks of that which is absolutely needful to make men truly, perfectly, and eternally happy; that which all men naturally desire and seek for. But they seek for it only among the things of this world, where they can never find it; for he that made them, designed them only for our present convenience and support, and therefore put no such power or virtue into them, that they should be able to make men happy; for that nothing can do, but what is able to satisfy all our desires. But our desires are in a manner infinite, so as to rest no where but in an infinite good; whereas the things of this world are all but finite; and therefore can never terminate or put a stop to our desires, but how much, or how many soever we have of them, we can still desire more, yea, though we had all things that God ever made, we should be still but where we were; for our desires would still be running on further and further, till they come to him that made them; and that made them incapable of fixing our desires, that himself alone might be the object of them.

Seeing therefore the things of this world can never

make us happy, none of them, nor all together, can be absolutely needful for us ; but we may be happy without them, as well as with them, even in this life ; much more in the next, when they shall be no more. So that we must there be happy without them, or not at all ; forasmuch as there will be none of those things there, which men upon earth take so much care and pains about, and all to no purpose, as to any real happiness and satisfaction they can find in them : as they themselves find by experience, and therefore must own all these things to be needless and impertinent.

So very needless and impertinent, as to the making us happy, that they cannot so much as keep us from being miserable. But as we may be happy without them, as well as with them, we may be miserable with them, as well as without them, as all mankind generally are, how much or how little soever they have of the things which are so much admired and sought for here below ; for we are all by nature the children of wrath, by reason of our original and many actual transgressions of his righteous laws, that we have all been guilty of ; we are all under the displeasure of the almighty Governor of the world, and therefore our condition must needs be bad, whether we see it or no, and theirs worse who will not see it ; for so long as he that made us is angry with us, all sorts of misery and calamity continually attend us ; his curse is always upon us, and upon all we have, even in this life. And howsoever we may flatter ourselves at present, his hand is stretched out, ready every moment to destroy us, both soul and body in hell. And what can all the things of this world do for us ? Can they appease the wrath of God, or rescue us out of his hands ? They may help indeed to hasten and increase our misery, but can never prevent or lessen it. It is not only the Wise-man's observation, but the common experience of all mankind, that *riches profit not in the day of wrath*, Prov. xi. 4. *What profit then hath a man*

of all his labour which he taketh under the sun ° Eccl. i. 3. no more than as if he had sat still and done nothing at all, if his labour was only for the things under the sun. For they are all, as the same Wise-man also observes, *vanity and vexation of spirit*. They are vanity, and therefore can never make us happy; and they are vexation of spirit too, and therefore serve only to make us miserable.

But let us hear what a greater than Solomon saith, even Christ himself; he saith, *What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?* Matt. xvi. 26. Where we see, how he who came into the world on purpose to save souls, takes it for granted, that although a man could get all this world, he may notwithstanding lose his own soul; and what then will all that he has got profit him? Will he give it in exchange for his soul? He would certainly, if he could, with all his heart. But alas! when his soul is once gone, all he had got is no longer his, but other people are possessed of it; and if it was still his own, he could not give it in exchange for his soul: *for it cost more to redeem his soul, so that he must let that alone for ever*, and be eternally tormented in the other world, notwithstanding all that he had got in this. And therefore nothing be sure in this world, no not this whole world, can be the *one thing needful*, spoken of in my text.

But why did our blessed Saviour put that question, and leave it upon record, for all men to consider at their leisure? It was doubtless to teach us, that the chief thing that a man is to take care of is his soul, that it may not be lost, but saved; for if all things in the world can no way profit him if he lose his soul, the saving his soul must needs be preferred before all things in the world. Not only before the riches, honours, and pleasures in it, but before all things else, which men are apt

to busy themselves about, to the neglect and hazard of their souls. Such, among other things, are the controversies and disputes about the circumstances of religion, which many are so hot and eager about, that they let go the substance, upon which the salvation of their souls depends. This men were apt to fall into, even in the great apostle's days; who therefore forewarned Titus of it, saying, *But avoid foolish questions, and genealogies, and contentions, and strivings about the law, for they are unprofitable and vain*, Tit. iii. 9. The same advice I must give to you who cannot but know, what strivings and contentions there have been, and what mischiefs they have done among us. If people believed in God, and worshipped and served him according to the doctrine and directions of our church, they would be undoubtedly saved. This the devil knows well enough; and therefore to take them off from the church, he fills their heads with a parcel of vain and unprofitable questions about little indifferent things, which serve only to distract their minds, and divert them from the substantial parts of religion, which are necessary to the salvation of their souls. Wherefore as you tender that, avoid all such unnecessary disputes and controversies, and follow only the *one thing needful*, that without which ye cannot be saved. Remember there are no outward circumstances in the whole Christian religion for which a man can have so fair a plea to trouble himself about them, as Martha had for her providing an entertainment for Christ himself; and yet Christ himself here tells her, that she did more than she needed; *Martha, Martha*, saith he, *thou art careful and troubled about many things; but one thing is needful*.

And that she might know what that *one thing* is, he directs her to it, by saying, *and Mary hath chosen the good part*. Mary was careful and troubled about nothing but the salvation of her soul; and therefore while her sister was running about, she sat at her Saviour's

feet, and heard and received the word of salvation from him, that she might be sanctified or made holy, without which she knew she could not be saved : wherefore our Saviour saith, that she had *chosen the good part, the one thing needful*. And hath thereby given us to understand, that the *one thing* which he here calls *needful*, is true piety, or holiness, which is so absolutely needful to salvation, that no man ever was, or can be saved without it : whereas, they who attain to true holiness cannot but be saved, God himself having engaged his word that they shall. For *holiness, or godliness*, as the apostle tells us, *is profitable for all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. It is of that mighty profit and advantage to mankind, that it hath not only the necessities of this life, but eternal happiness and salvation in the next, promised to it by him who cannot lie. Who himself also saith; that other people *shall go into everlasting punishment; but the righteous into life eternal*, Matt. xxv. 46. And when the other shall be cast into a furnace of fire, then *the righteous shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, chap. xiii. 42, 43.

The righteous, or saints; they who are *created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, and accordingly do all the good works which God hath prepared for them to walk in. They whose hearts are wholly inclined to God, and set to obey his commandments. They who *deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world*. They who are wholly sanctified by the Holy Spirit, and so are made *holy, as he who hath called them is holy, in all manner of conversation*. They shall receive the *crown of righteousness; an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them*; where they shall see and enjoy God, and live as happily as it is possible for creatures to live for evermore. But none else shall do so; *for without holiness no man*

shall see the Lord, Heb. xii. 14. nor indeed can, if he might; for he that is not pure and holy, is not capable of seeing him who is purity and holiness itself, nor by consequence of enjoying those pure and spiritual joys which the sight of him affords: and therefore, such a one, though he might, yet he is not *to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. It is the inheritance of the saints, and of them only. None else ever shall or can have any part or portion in it.

From hence therefore we may see, what is the *one thing needful*; even that which the apostle calls the *power of godliness*, 2 Tim. iii. 5. Whereby a man is able to overcome the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to exercise himself always to *have a conscience void of offence both towards God and men*. Whereby his soul is so firmly fixed upon God, that he is in a right disposition to love, and fear, and serve, and honour, and obey him, heartily and sincerely upon earth; and to behold, admire, and enjoy him perfectly in heaven. Unless a man be thus holy, he can never be happy. And therefore this must needs be the *one thing needful*, which all men must labour for with all their might, above all things upon earth besides, as ever they desire to be saved.

But then the great question is, how we may get this *one thing needful*? How we, who are all by nature corrupt and sinful, may notwithstanding become thus pure and holy? That the thing is possible, we cannot doubt, seeing it hath been actually done. We read of many whom God himself in his holy word was pleased to call saints, righteous, and holy, and therefore may be confident they were such in his esteem, otherwise he would never have given them such a character. And in all ages since, there have been many such, though not in comparison of the rest of mankind, yet absolutely considered in themselves. And I doubt not but there are some at this time upon earth, and would be many more, if people would but take the right course for it. But

that the generality of mankind will not do : most will not labour at all for it ; and of those that do, many seek it where it is not to be had. As our Saviour himself has taught us, saying, *Strive to enter in at the strait gate ; for many, I say unto you, shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able,* Luke xiii. 24. even because they do not seek it aright. They seek it by their own light, or by their own strength, or by their own merits, or some such by-way, which God hath not appointed for it, and then it is no wonder if they miss of it ; for it is impossible to have it any other way, than that which God hath made and prescribed for our attainment of it.

Which in general is by his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ ; for he is the *way, the truth, and the life : no man cometh to the Father but by him,* John xiv. 6. *Neither is there salvation in any other,* Acts iv. 12. nor any thing necessary to it, much less our sanctification, which is in effect salvation itself. And therefore we are said to be *sanctified in Christ Jesus,* 1 Cor. i. 2. and to be *created in him unto good works, which God hath before ordained, that we should walk in them,* Eph. ii. 10. *So that we can do all things through Christ, which strengtheneth us,* Phil. iv. 13. *But without him we can do nothing,* John xv. 5. nor by him, without believing in him. For it is to our faith in him, that all things relating to our eternal salvation by him are ascribed in his holy Gospel, particularly our being sanctified or made pure and holy. For it is by *faith* that our hearts are purified, Acts xv. 9. and we are *sanctified by faith that is in Christ Jesus,* chap. xxvi. 18. And therefore the first thing required towards our getting the *one thing needful*, is to believe in Christ, and trust on him to give it us ; without which, whatsoever else we do will avail us nothing, but all our endeavours after it will be in vain and to no purpose.

Whereas if we live with a stedfast belief and trust upon God our Saviour for it, he will most certainly

fulfil the promises which he hath made us for that purpose, and accordingly bestow his special grace upon us, in the use of the means which he hath ordained in his church for that end. And therefore our next care must be, to exercise ourselves constantly and sincerely in the use of the said means that he hath appointed for our obtaining grace and salvation from him, which we cannot choose but do, if we heartily and earnestly desire to have it.

I say, if we heartily and earnestly desire to have it ; for unless we do so, we can never labour as we ought for it, nor by consequence receive *the end of our faith, even the sanctification and salvation of our souls*. Which therefore that we may, we must follow the example of the great saint in my text, of whom Christ himself gives this testimony, that she *had chosen that good part*. So must we ; we must choose it, as she did, as it is the good part, the best we can choose, the *one thing needful* ; and therefore before all things upon earth besides. For if there be any one thing which we choose before it, we do not choose it as it is the *one thing needful*, and therefore do not properly choose it at all, as Mary did. Neither can we make it our chief care to obtain it, as we must do, if we ever have it ; we must observe the method and order which Christ himself hath prescribed for it. We must first *seek the kingdom of God, and his righteousness*, Matt. vi. 33. that must be the uppermost in all our thoughts ; the highest of all our desires ; the first thing we seek and labour for in all the world. And so it certainly will be, if we believe it to be the *one thing needful*. For then all things else would seem to us, as they are in themselves, needless and impertinent ; at least in comparison of that. We should then play no longer with religion, but set about it in good earnest, and be willing to part with all we have in the world, for that which we believe to be better than all things in it. As the merchant in the parable, who having found one pearl of

great price, sold all he had to purchase it, Matt. xiii. 45. This is that pearl, that one pearl of great inestimable price, for which we can never give, or suffer, or do too much. When our minds are thus set upon true piety and virtue, so as to look upon it, as it is the *one thing needful*; then we shall be rightly disposed and qualified for the obtaining it in the use of the means which God hath appointed for it, and shall readily catch at all opportunities that we can get of using them, and thank God heartily for them.

This being premised, give me leave to suppose, what I most heartily wish, that all here present are thus minded; that you are fully persuaded in your judgments and consciences, that it is better to be good and virtuous, than it is to be great, and rich, and honourable in the world; that the greatest pleasure you can have is to please God; and your highest honour, to honour him: *that to be righteous before God, walking in all his commandments and ordinances blameless*, so as to be *numbered with his saints in glory everlasting*, is the *one thing needful* for all men to seek and labour for.

Now supposing that you are thus minded, you cannot choose but do all that lies in your power for the attainment of so great a good, the *one thing needful* to your obtaining real and eternal happiness. For which purpose therefore you must, in the first place, apply yourselves to Almighty God for it, who is the author and giver of every good and perfect gift, such as this is. And who hath passed his word, that he will give the Holy Spirit, the fountain and principle of true holiness, *to them that ask him*, Luke xi. 13. But you must ask him for it, not only now and then, but constantly. You must pray always, and not *faint*, chap. xviii. 1. You must *pray without ceasing*, 1 Thess. v. 17. and that too, not in a careless and customary manner, as most do, but heartily, earnestly, importunately, as for your life; for your life, your eternal life, depends upon it. But that ye may be sure to have what you ask, ye must

be sure to ask it in the name of Jesus, the only Mediator between God and men, who hath promised, that if ye *ask any thing in his name, he will do it*, John xiv. 13, 14. xvi. 23. Which promise ye must have an eye unto, and believe and depend upon it in all your prayers : that we may always pray in faith, nothing wavering or doubting, James i. 6, 7 1 Tim. ii. 8. otherwise ye will pray, as most people do, in vain ; for if ye will not do him so much right, as to take his word, you have no ground to expect that he should fulfil it to you.

If ye thus pray every day to your Father in secret, *your Father which seeth in secret will reward you openly*, or in public, Matt. vi. 6. For then ye will be always ready and prepared to meet him in his own house, and there sit, as Mary did, at the feet of Jesus, and hear his word. But you will say, perhaps, how can that be ? Jesus was then upon earth, in the very place where Mary was, and therefore she might well sit at his feet, and hear what he said : but he hath now left the earth, and is gone up into heaven, and there sitteth at the right hand of the Father, where we cannot so much as see him, much less come near him, if we would : how then can we sit at his feet, or hear what he saith ? To that I answer, it is true, our Saviour is now in heaven ; and it is well for us that he is there : for he is there interceding for those who believe in him, that they may have all things that may conduce to their salvation, and particularly the *one thing needful*. But that they may be sure to have it, though his body be in heaven, yet he himself is with them upon earth too, whensoever they meet together in his name to seek it : this we cannot doubt of, having his own word for it, saying, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. And if he be in the midst of you, as he most certainly is, at this and all other times, whensoever ye meet together in his name, you may well sit at his feet and hear his word, as Mary did : for though ye cannot see him with your bodily

eyes, yet ye may see him by faith, *the evidence of things not seen* : whereby you may and ought to be as certain as Mary was, that he is in the very place where you are. And as plainly hear his word, though not as spoken immediately by himself, yet as repeated after him by those whom he sends to do it ; to whom he therefore saith, *He that heareth you, heareth me*, Luke x. 16.

When I consider this, I cannot but wonder how people can carry themselves as they commonly do at church, with no more reverence and devotion than they do at home, coming in, staying here a while, and then going out again, with no more concern upon them, than as if nobody was among them or saw them but their fellow-creatures. But I beg of you to consider, do not ye believe what Christ said to be true ? I hope ye do. Now, suppose you saw him, the eternal Son of God, your Lord, your Saviour, your Judge ; suppose you saw him at this time standing in the midst of you, encircled with rays of glory and majesty about his head, and with all spiritual blessings in his hand, ready to distribute them to all that have a mind to them : if thus you saw him, could ye be able to stand upon your legs ? Would not ye all fall down and worship him ? Would not your eyes be all fastened upon him, and your ears listen to what he saith ? Would not ye beseech him, upon your knees, to have mercy upon you, to bless you, and give you the pearl of great price that is in his hand ? I dare say ye would. And yet this is your case at this time, and at all times when ye meet together in his name. If you truly believe the Gospel, ye cannot but see your Saviour with the eye of faith in the midst of you, as plainly as Mary did, when she sat at his feet. And then, how gravely, how modestly, how reverently would ye behave yourselves before him, all the while you are in his house, and especially at his holy table, where you see him coming to you, and offering you his most blessed body and blood, to preserve your souls and bodies to everlasting life ? You would then

not stand looking about you, but upon him who is in the midst of you, and strive all ye can to do the business that he hath set you, so as that ye may please him, and receive his blessing.

Which therefore that ye may, and so never come altogether, as many do, for the worse, but always for the better, let me advise you all, that whensoever ye go to the house of God, consider whither you are going, and whom you are to meet there. And so soon as ever ye come into his presence, be sure to fall down upon your knees before him, humbly beseeching him to assist you in doing the work you come about. And then, in an humble confidence of his assistance, set upon it with all your might; offering up your prayers and praises unto God, not only with your lips, but from the bottom of your hearts: receiving the word you hear not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, *which effectually worketh in them who believe*: and feeding upon the blessed body and blood of our Saviour with such a quick and lively faith, that his grace may be alway sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in your weakness. I need not tell you, that you must be upon your knees all the while that you are praying to Almighty God; for that ye cannot but choose to be, if you pray in faith; and without that ye had as good be out of the church as in it, as to any good that ye can either do or get there, as some here present have found, I fear, by long experience: but this I must put you in mind of, that as ye must thus use the means of grace continually, as often as ye can get an opportunity; so whensoever ye have used them, ye must always lift up your hearts to Christ your Saviour, and trust on him for God's acceptance of what ye have done, and for his blessing upon it. And then ye can never come to church, but ye will return home wiser and better than ye came. And so grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord every day, more and more, till

ye arrive to that degree of righteousness or true holiness, which is the *one thing needful* to make you happy for ever.

For this is that good part which Mary chose; and which our Saviour therefore said should not be taken away from her; seeing she had chosen it, nothing should hinder or deprive her of it; but she should most certainly have it, and keep it; which is a great encouragement to us, to do as she and many others have done before us. There are many glorified saints at this time in heaven, which once were sinful mortals upon earth, as we are now. But when they were here, they laboured so as to get the *one thing needful*, to make them eternally happy: they were cleansed, and sanctified, and justified, and reconciled to God, and made his faithful servants and children by adoption and grace, and are now shining forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. And why then should not we as well as they? We have the same Gospel to direct us, the same Spirit to assist us, the same Mediator to intercede for us, and all the same means to obtain the *one thing needful*, which they had. Why then should not we obtain it as well as they? Let us but resolve to labour for it as they did, *by pressing towards the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ*, and we cannot miss of it.

This, therefore, is that which I must now advise and beseech you all in the name of Christ to do. And for that purpose desire you all to consider, first, that this is the *one thing needful*. There are none, I suppose, here present, but have some business to do in the world: many that, like Martha, are careful and troubled about many things.

But to what purpose is all your care and trouble about many things, if they be such only as ye have no real need of, and not that one thing which alone can do you good? Is not this to labour in vain? Is it not to

moil and toil, and to no purpose? Or rather is it not to very ill purpose? even to make yourselves miserable, both here and hereafter too: yet this is the case of most men; of all who *labour for the meat that perisheth*, and not *for that which endureth to everlasting life*; who apply their minds wholly to the affairs of this life, and not to the study of true piety, to be and to do good in the world, the *one thing needful*, without which, whatsoever they get besides will avail them nothing; whereas with it they might have all the good things they can desire.

For remember also the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you*, Matt. vi. 33. whereby he hath assured you, upon his word, that if ye seek the *one thing needful* before all things else, ye shall have both that and whatsoever else ye have any real need of. Who then that are wise, and mind their own good, would not do so? And yet, after all, how few are in the world that will? But let others do what they please, and take what follows; God grant that we may be all in the number of those few, that make it their chief care and study to get the *one thing needful*, that the rest of our life hereafter may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON LIII.

UNIVERSAL OBEDIENCE REQUISITE TO SALVATION.

LUKE i. 6.

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

ALTHOUGH the whole nature of man be very much depraved and disordered by the fall of our first parents, yet by virtue of the promise which was immediately after made unto them, *that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head*, there have been some, in all ages, sincerely good and righteous men. For, as the apostle saith, *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners ; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. By the disobedience of the first Adam, in eating the forbidden fruit, many, even all mankind, which are very many indeed, were both guilty of, and defiled with sin : but Christ the second Adam, having been obedient to death, even the death of the cross, many are thereby made and accepted as righteous before God himself. And that too, not only since, but before his passion, in all ages since the beginning of the world ; for the aforesaid promise being made to our first parents, while they were yet in paradise, upon the same day on which they fell, from that time the virtue of Christ's blood signified in it began to take place ; who is therefore called the *Lamb*

slain from the foundation of the world, Apoc. xiii. 8. For so he was in the degree and promise of God, which was as certain to take effect, as if it was done already.

And hence it is that God hath always had his church upon earth, the communion of saints, a company of pious and just persons, that walked in holiness and righteousness before him all their days : some of which are recorded in the holy Scriptures, and so are attested by God himself to have been such. As Abel is said to have been a righteous person. *Enoch walked with God*, that is, as St. Paul explains it, *he had this testimony, that he pleased God*, Gen. v. 24. Heb. xi. 5. *Noah was a just man, and perfect in his generations, and walked with God*, Gen. vi. 9. Such also were Abraham and his nephew Lot, Isaac and Jacob, and other of the patriarchs, Moses, Aaron, Caleb, Joshua, Samuel. *Job was a perfect and upright man, one that feared God, and eschewed evil*, Job i. 1. *David was a man after God's own heart*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. And several of the succeeding kings are said to have followed his steps, as Asa, Jehoshaphat, Uzziah, Jotham, Hezekiah, and Josiah. Besides which, there were in every age many excellent persons, whose names were written in the book of life, although not recorded in the holy Scriptures. In Ahab's reign, when the prophet Elijah himself knew of none but himself that worshipped the true God, God knew of many more, and therefore said, *Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, that have not bowed the knee to Baal*, 1 Kings xix. 18. Rom. xi. 4. And of these it was that the church of God then consisted, when as to all outward appearance it was quite overrun with idolatry and superstition. Such there were in all ages throughout the whole Old Testament, besides the prophets whom God raised up for their instruction and comfort. And after that too, when the Spirit of prophecy ceased, the Spirit of holiness still continued in the church, or rather made the church still to continue, by enlightening, sanctifying, and confirming many in the true faith and

fear of God, as we read in the history of the Maccabees: and so all along from Malachi, to our Saviour's coming into the world, which was about four hundred years. But Malachi being the last of the prophets of the Old Testament, and knowing himself to be so, he concludes his prophecy with a clear prediction of Elias, or St. John Baptist, the forerunner of Christ. For having foretold the coming of Christ, as the Sun of righteousness, which should arise with healing in his wings, and exhorted the church to continue in the mean while to observe the Mosaic law, he puts an end to his own, and all the prophecies of the Old Testament, by saying in the name of God, *Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet, before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord; and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse,* Mal. iv. 5, 6. Whereby he plainly intimated, that no more prophets were to be now expected till Elijah came, but that he should come next, and prepare the way for Christ, the Messiah, whom all the prophets had foretold.

Now as the prophet Malachi concludes the Old Testament with the prediction of Elias; the Evangelist St. Luke begins the New with a history of his coming, according to that prediction. For that John the Baptist was that Elias, which the prophet spake of, is attested by the holy angel who foretold his birth, Luke i. 17. And by a greater witness than he, by Christ himself, Matt. xi. 14. And therefore this Evangelist, to shew the great agreement betwixt the Law and Gospel, and to connect or join them the better together, he begins his Gospel where the Law ended, even with the birth of John the Baptist; and for our better understanding how he came into the world, he first acquaints us with his parents, describing them both by their names, their family, and their character; his father's name was Zacharias, his mother's Elizabeth, both of the family of

Aaron, he being a priest of the course of Abia, she one of the daughters of Aaron, although some of her ancestors had intermarried with the tribe of Judah, as is plain from her being related to the blessed Virgin, and called her cousin, Luke i. 36.

But the thing I chiefly design to insist on at present is, the character which the Evangelist here gives us of these two persons, Zacharias and Elizabeth, saying, *And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* Which is as high a character, as great an encomium, as can be given of any persons whatsoever. And it being given them by the Holy Spirit of God himself, we cannot but conclude both these to have been in the number of those holy and righteous persons before spoken of, sound members of that church which Christ had established upon earth before his incarnation, real and true saints, such as we must all be, if we desire to go to heaven. For these words contain a plain and full description of such persons; insomuch, that should you ask me who they are whom the Scriptures call saints, and whom God will accept of as such, I could not resolve you better than in these words, They are such as are righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. This is the character which God himself here gives of two of his saints or servants, and which he hath left upon record, on purpose that we might follow their example, and become such too. For which purpose therefore it will be necessary to consider two things in this text.

I. What is the true sense and meaning of the words in general, as spoken of Zacharias and Elizabeth.

II. How we must apply them to ourselves, so as to become such persons as they were.

But before we shew in what sense these words are to be understood, we must first consider in what sense they are not to be understood: even not so as if these two persons were absolutely perfect and free from sin,

as the papists and others interpret the words ; and therefore would infer from them, that a man may be so perfect, and observe the whole law of God so exactly, even in this life, that he may be justified by his own works, without any respect to the righteousness and merits of Christ.

But this cannot possibly be the meaning of the words, as being contrary to many other texts of Scripture, and to the very context itself : for nothing is more frequently asserted by God himself, than that all mankind are guilty before him. *For there is no man*, saith Solomon, *that sinneth not*, 1 Kings viii. 46. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin ?* Prov. xx. 9. *They are all gone aside*, saith David, *they are altogether become filthy, there is none that doth good, no not one*, Psal. xiv. 3. From whence St. Paul infers, that *all the world is become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, ver. 23. yea, the very best of men, in the best actions of their whole life ; for *there is not a just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. And therefore St. John himself, one of the best men that ever lived, saith of himself and all his fellow-saints, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us*, 1 John i. 8. And *if we say that we have no sin, we make him a liar, and the truth is not in us*, ver. 10. So that whosoever saith he hath no sin, he sins in saying so ; for he tells a lie, yea, and makes God himself to be a liar too, which is one of the greatest sins a man can be guilty of, which no good man, be sure, is : but the better any man is, the worse he always looks upon himself to be, as being more sensible of his own sins and imperfections than others are : who was ever more pure, more holy, more righteous, more approved of by God himself, than David was, a man after God's own heart ? and yet how humbly doth he confess his sins, how frequently bewail them, how earnestly beg pardon

for them? Not only for one or two, but for many which he knew himself to be guilty of. *Mine iniquities*, saith he, *are gone over my head, as an heavy burthen, they are too heavy for me*, Psal. xxxviii. 3. *For innumerable evils have compassed me about, mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me*, Psal. xl. 12. And, *who can understand how oft he offendeth? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults*, Psal. xix. 12.

And in the New Testament, St. Paul, whom Christ himself called a chosen vessel unto him, and who, by the Spirit of God, could truly say, that *touching the righteousness which is in the law he was blameless*, Phil. iii. 6. yet after all, he was so far from looking upon himself as perfect, that he acknowledgeth himself to be less than the least of all saints, yea, to be the greatest of all sinners. *This*, saith he, *is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief*, 1 Tim. i. 15.

And if these two, king David and St. Paul, who were certainly as great saints as ever lived upon the face of the earth, if they were not perfect, nor free from sin, we may well conclude, that no mere man ever was so. And by consequence, that the words of my text cannot be so understood, as if the two persons there mentioned were so righteous, that there was no sin or unrighteousness at all in them.

The same appears also from the context itself, where it is said, that Zacharias was a priest, and that he executed the priestly office. But, as St. Augustine observes, the priests offered sacrifices, *first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people*, Levit. xvi. 6. And therefore every time that Zacharias offered any sacrifice, he thereby acknowledged himself guilty of sins, of such sins as could not be expiated but by some propitiatory sacrifice offered to God for them; yea, in this very

place, we find him guilty of a great sin, in not believing the message which God had sent by an angel : which was so great a sin, that God was pleased to punish him immediately for it, by making him dumb, and not able to speak, until the day that the message was performed, Luke i. 20. From all which, it appears, that these words cannot, without manifest absurdity, be so interpreted, as if these two persons were so righteous, that there was no unrighteousness in them ; that they walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord so, as never to trip or stumble in any of them ; or were so blameless, that God himself could find no fault with them.

But in what sense then are the words to be understood ? To understand that, we must first consider them apart, and then we shall easily see into the meaning of them altogether.

First therefore, they were both righteous, that is, good, honest, virtuous, and religious persons ; they both lived in the true faith and fear of God : they both believed aright in him, and their hearts were set to obey his commandments, and to do all such good works as he had prepared for them to walk in. For so the word *δικαιος*, here used, commonly signifies in the New Testament, as צַדִּיק, from whence it comes, doth in the Old. Even as *ἀδικία*, *unrighteousness*, is used for all manner of vice and wickedness, so is *δικαιοσύνη*, *righteousness*, used for goodness and virtue in general. And so St. John interprets the word, where he saith, *he that doth righteousness is righteous, as God is righteous*, 1 John iii. 7 where we see the word used of men in the same sense in a lower, as it is used by God himself in an higher degree. And therefore must needs denote, that divine frame and temper of mind whereby we resemble God himself, being in our capacities *holy as he is holy, in all manner of conversation*.

Thus, therefore, these two persons were both righteous, and that too, as the text saith, *before God* ; that

is, not only in the esteem of men, but in the sight of God himself: the great Searcher of hearts knew they did not dissemble or play the hypocrites, but were hearty and sincere in their obedience to him. They were not like Simon Magus, of whom St. Peter said; that his *heart was not right in the sight of God*, Acts viii. 21. But their hearts were as right as their outward behaviour before him, so as to serve him, as David adviseth his son, *with a perfect heart, and a willing mind*, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. And this sincerity or integrity of heart is that which God is pleased to accept of in the new covenant instead of perfection, and is frequently called by that name; as where Noah is said to be a just and perfect man, Gen. vi. 9. and Job to be *a perfect and upright man*, Job i. 1. that is, they were cordial and sincere in all their duties to God, serving him in holiness and righteousness before him, or in his sight, all their days, Luke i. 75. Thus God himself seems to explain the word, when he ratified and confirmed the new covenant with Abraham, saying, *Walk before me, and be thou perfect*, Gen. xvii. 1. As if he had said, Walk always as in my sight, so as to keep thy heart right and sincere before me, and then, by the covenant which I now establish with thee, thou shalt be perfect, for I will accept of thee as such. And thus it was that both these persons in my text, walked before God, and so were righteous, not only in outward appearance, but truly and sincerely, God himself being witness.

But that we may the better understand wherein it was that this their righteousness consisted, the Evangelist tells us, it was in their *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord*. This was their righteousness. They walked, implying this to be their way, their constant course of life, to adjust all their thoughts, words, and actions to the laws of God. They walked in all, not only in some, but in every one of the commandments; not only in all the commandments, but likewise

in all the ordinances of the Lord: of the Lord, not of men. It was no part of their righteousness to observe the traditions of their forefathers, which the Pharisees in those days laid so much stress upon; but they kept close to all the commandments and ordinances which the Lord, the Lord of hosts, the supreme Lawgiver of the world, had delivered to them.

But seeing they are said to walk in the ordinances, as well as in the commandments, of the Lord, it is plain these were two distinct things, and therefore it will be necessary to consider the difference between them. For which purpose we must call to mind, how Almighty God was pleased to deliver three sorts of laws unto his people, the moral, the ceremonial, and the judicial law, which in the Old Testament are commonly called commandments, statutes, and judgments; of which the last, even the judgments of judicial law, concerned only the civil government of that nation, which being at that time subject to the Roman empire, and governed for the most part by the imperial laws, there is no mention made of the judicial law in this place, but only of the other two, even the moral and ceremonial, whereof the first is called the commandments, the other, the ordinances of the Lord. And what part of the judicial law was still in use, seems to be comprehended under the latter. And it may not be unworthy our observation, that Moses himself, though he often reckons up all the three laws together, yet sometimes he compriseth them under two; as where he saith, *Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes and his commandments*, Deut. iv. 40. which the Seventy translate by the same words that are used in my text, even ἐντολας and δικαιώματα, commandments and ordinances, or statutes.

Now these two persons in my text walked in both these laws; first in the moral law, here called the commandments, which God at first wrote upon the fleshly tables of man's heart, afterwards published with thundering and lightning upon mount Sinai, and at last tran-

scribed with his own finger upon two tables of stone, to signify their perpetuity, that they were to remain for ever, although the other were not, and therefore were not published or written after that manner, as the Ten Commandments were. And besides, the other laws were made only for the people of Israel, but the ten oblige all mankind; so that all mankind shall be judged by them at the last day. And therefore Zacharias and Elizabeth took especial care to observe them in the first place, first the commandments, and then the ordinances. Neither did they observe one or more, but all of them: those of the second, as well as those of the first table; and those which respected God, as well as those which respected their neighbour: and to keep their conscience, as St. Paul did, *void of all offence both towards God and towards man.*

And although the ceremonial or levitical law, here called the ordinances, was not of that universal or perpetual obligation as the moral was, yet they being both Israelites, and living before the death of Christ, with whom it expired, they were then bound to observe that as well as the other; and therefore did accordingly walk as in all the commandments, so likewise in all the ordinances of the Lord, in all the rites and ceremonies of the levitical law, so far as they were any way concerned in them, he as a priest, and either of them as being of that nation. It is true, these ordinances were very many, very chargeable, and very difficult to be observed. There were many sacrifices and many offerings to be made upon several occasions; as, besides the continual burnt-offerings, every morning and evening there were the meat-offerings, peace-offerings, sin-offerings, trespass-offerings, first-fruits, tenths, and the like. There were many feasts and fasts to be observed throughout the year, many sorts of food to be abstained from, many outward defilements to be avoided, many things to be observed in the garments they wore, and in the very ploughing, and sowing, and reaping their corn, insomuch

that this law of commandments contained in ordinances, as the apostle calls it, Eph. ii. 15. was really a yoke of bondage, Gal. v. 1 yea, such a yoke, that few were able to bear it, Acts xv. 10. And yet these two persons bore it so, that they walked, as in all the commandments, so likewise in all the ordinances of the Lord, blameless.

Blameless, ἀμεμπτοι, unproveable. The same word which St. Paul useth of himself, where he saith, *that as touching the righteousness which is in the law, he was blameless*, Phil. iii. 6. So were both these persons, in respect both of the moral and levitical law, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, so as never to give any just cause of offence to any one. No man could justly blame or condemn them, for any neglect or failure in any duty that was required of them. They were both persons of a clear reputation in the eye of the world, as it became those to be, of whom he was to be born, who was to prepare the way for the Saviour of the world.

Neither were they blameless only in the sight of men, but likewise in the esteem of God himself. For though he knew they had been guilty of many actual, as well as of original sins, yet he had forgiven them, so as to esteem and accept of them as righteous persons, and therefore not to be blamed or condemned for what they had done amiss.

But lest this should seem strange, we must consider, that God knowing the corruption and frailty of our nature, whereby no man is able always to stand upright, but will sometimes fall into sin, and so be liable to death and misery, he himself, of his infinite mercy to his own people, was pleased to provide a remedy for them, whereby they might be freed from the guilt they had contracted, at least in ordinary cases. For in the very body of the commandments and ordinances which he delivered to them, he ordained some whereby to expiate the breach of the other. As that if a man sin through

ignorance against any of the commandments, he shall bring, according to his quality, a young bullock or a kid, *and lay his hand upon the head of it, and the priest shall offer it up as a sin-offering, and make atonement for the sin which the man had committed, and then it shall be forgiven him*, as God expressly promised, Lev. v. 6. *And if a man sin wilfully, by telling a lie, swearing falsely, deceiving or wronging his neighbour, or the like, after restitution made, he shall bring his trespass-offering to the Lord, a ram, and the priest shall make atonement for him before the Lord, and it shall be forgiven him, for any thing of all that he has done, in trespassing therein.* These are the very words of the law, Lev. vi. 7. The like provision was made in most other cases, where either the commandments or ordinances of the Lord were broken.

Whensoever therefore Zacharias or Elizabeth, or any other truly devout person, had committed any sin, as be sure they did sometimes, either of ignorance or wilfulness, they presently took this course; they brought their sin or trespass-offering, according to the nature of their crime, and the priest having therewith made atonement for the sin, the sin was effectually remitted, and the person that committed it was no longer guilty of it, but as blameless as if he had never committed it, and that too in the esteem of God himself: for he himself saith, *the sin shall be forgiven*; or, as the words may be rendered, *the sin is forgiven, ipso facto*. And if the sin be forgiven, the guilt is all taken away, and then the blame must needs cease, and the person, in the eye of the law, is in the same state he was before he committed the sin, blameless.

As we see also in that remarkable character which is given of David, much like that in my text; for as it is here said, that these two persons *walked in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, so it is said of David, *that he did that which was right in*

the eyes of the Lord, and turned not aside from any thing that he had commanded him all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite, 1 Kings xv. 5. David without all doubt was guilty of many other sins besides that, several of which are recorded in Scripture; as in the matter of Nabal, Mephibosheth, and in numbering the people; for which God was so angry at him, that he punished him with a severe plague among the people he had numbered. But for these and such-like sins he had brought his trespass-offerings, and so they were atoned and expiated, and therefore no longer imputed to him. As it is particularly recorded in that of his numbering the people; for he had no sooner offered his burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, *but the Lord was entreated for the land, and the plague was stayed from Israel,* 2 Kings xxiv. 25. and therefore notwithstanding his other sins, he was looked upon in the eye of the law as not having *turned aside from any of the commandments, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite,* for which the law had provided no propitiatory sacrifice, as he himself confesseth in the exercise of his repentance for it, saying, *For thou desirest not sacrifice, else would I give it; thou delightest not in burnt-offerings,* Psal. li. 17 that is, for such sins as these are. They being so great, that nothing less than a broken spirit and a contrite heart will be accepted as a sacrifice for them, ver. 18.

But as for his other sins, the law itself having acquitted and discharged him from them, they were remembered no more against him. And therefore it was truly said, that he turned not aside from any of the commandments; because he always either kept the commandments themselves, or did that whereby the breach of them was made up.

But as it doth not follow from David's being said to have done right in the eyes of the Lord, and not to have turned aside from any of his commandments, that he never had committed any actual sin but that in the

matter of Uriah ; so here because it is said that Zacharias and Elizabeth *were both righteous before God, and walked in all his commandments and ordinances blameless* ; it doth not thence follow, that they never had been guilty of any sin, but that their guilt and blame was taken off by the sacrifices which God had ordained in that case, and so were part of the ordinances which they always walked in.

Not that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sin, as the apostle saith, Heb. x. 4. There could be no such virtue in them, but as they were types of Christ, who offered up himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and therefore is called, *the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. But because he was to offer up himself but once, and that too in the last ages of the world, God was pleased in the mean while to accept of bullocks, and goats, and lambs, and the like, instead of him, as he did of a ram instead of Isaac, and to promise the pardon of sin to those which offered them, upon the account of his own Son's death signified by them, as it was by all the bloody sacrifices that were ever offered by his appointment. Christ was looked upon as typically slain or offered in them ; and it was for his sake only that they which offered them obtained remission of their sins : he being the only true propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of the world, 1 John ii. 2. Who is therefore said, *to be made sin*, that is, a sin-offering, *for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. and by reason of this relation betwixt the type and antitype, or betwixt the sacrifices of the old law, and the death of Christ typified by them, he that brought any such sacrifice, and laid his hand upon the head of it, as he was bound to do, thereby transferred, as it were, his sin to Christ ; and when the sacrifice was offered up, the merits of Christ's death were transferred to him for the pardon of them. Not but that repentance, and faith in Christ,

were as necessary in order unto pardon then, as now : but this was the way which God himself appointed at that time, for the exercise of those graces to that purpose. For he that brought a sin-offering, or a sacrifice to be offered for any sin he had committed, did thereby plainly confess his sin, and likewise express his repentance and sorrow for it, in that he would be at so much charges to have it pardoned. And then he testified by faith also in the promise that God had made for the pardon of it, upon his bringing such a sacrifice : for he would not have brought the sacrifice, if he did not believe the promise. But all the promises of pardon, upon the account of such sacrifices, being made only in Christ typified by them, his faith ultimately terminated in Christ himself ; for whose sake therefore his sins were pardoned, and he himself accounted of as righteous before God, notwithstanding the sins he had committed against him.

By this therefore we may easily see the true sense and meaning of the words in my text ; for seeing these two persons sincerely endeavoured to perform whatsoever either the moral or levitical law required of them, and whensoever through ignorance, inadvertency, or the violence of temptations, they happened to fall into any sin, by the breach of either of those laws, they presently took care to have it expiated, by bringing their sin or trespass-offering, as the law in that case had provided ; hence, as to the righteousness which was in the levitical law, they were blameless ; yea, and righteous before God himself, who was pleased to accept of this their sincerity, instead of that absolute perfection which the moral law required, upon the account of that most perfect obedience, which his own Son was to perform for them, even unto death. In and by whom therefore *they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

But you will say, perhaps, what is all this to us ? Is it possible for us to be thus righteous and blameless as

these two were ? To that I answer, it is most certainly possible ; it is possible for every one here present to be so. Possible, did I say ? nay, it is far more easy for us than it was for them : forasmuch as the commandments which God hath set us, are the very same which they walked in ; and the ordinances he hath delivered to us, are both fewer in number, and far less difficult to be observed, than theirs were : and the whole way of our attaining to true righteousness is made much plainer to us under the Gospel, than it was to them under the Law. Insomuch that we are not only bound to be as righteous as they were, but we have more obligations upon us to be so than they had. I do not say, that we are bound to be more righteous, but that we are more bound to be righteous than they were ; for they, doubtless, were as righteous as we can be, and by consequence as we are bound to be. The righteousness of all the saints, before and since Christ's coming, and so from the beginning to the end of the world, being all the same righteousness. And that these two persons had attained to as high a degree of it as it was needful, or indeed possible for them to do, we cannot doubt, in that they have this testimony from God himself, that they were righteous before him. But we, by the Gospel, having clearer discoveries both of our duty to God and of his promises to us, than they had under the Law, we must needs be so much more obliged to *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

This therefore is that which we are now to consider, even how we may become such righteous persons as these were : righteous in the sight of God himself ? A question, which I suppose you all desire to have resolved, as being, I hope, desirous to become such yourselves. And unless you really desire it, it will be in vain for you to hearken to what shall be said about it. But if you really and heartily desire it, you cannot but resolve beforehand to practise whatsoever I shall prove from God's holy word to be necessary in order to it. And

indeed such an holy resolution is the first step towards your obtaining of it: and that without which it will be to no purpose for me to say any more concerning it; for what will it signify to you, for me to shew you how you may be righteous, if you in the mean while care not whether you be so or no? or to prescribe any rules about it, while you are resolved not to observe them, or at least are not resolved to do it? Nothing being more certain, than that no man will do a thing, but what he is first resolved to do. Whereas do but resolve in good earnest with yourselves, that by the grace of God you will from henceforth use the utmost of your care and diligence, in observing every thing that may conduce to your being truly and sincerely righteous as these persons were before God, and you need not question, but that, by the assistance and merits of your blessed Saviour, you may attain it.

For this purpose therefore I desire you to observe in general, how these persons become thus righteous. *They were righteous, saith the text, before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.* By this means it was that they became righteous, by *walking in all the commandments, and in all the ordinances of the Lord*, as they ought to do. And by this means it is that we must be made righteous, if ever we be so at all; which therefore that you may be, or at least understand how to be so, I shall shew,

I. That you ought to walk in all the commandments.

II. What are those ordinances you must walk in, and how you must walk in all them too.

III. How by this means you will become righteous before God.

As for the first, what the commandments of the Lord are, you all know, even those ten, which, as I observed before, he delivered upon mount Sinai, and afterwards wrote with his own finger upon two tables of stone, under which all the moral duties which you owe either

to God himself, or to one another, are comprehended, as they are explained by the prophets in the Old, and by Christ and his apostles in the New Testament. These you must always walk in ; that is, you must direct your thoughts, your affections, your words, and your actions, all according to them ; sincerely endeavouring all you can, never to turn aside from any of them, either to the right hand or to the left ; but still keeping as close as possibly you can to every one of them.

I say, to every one of them, for so did these two persons : *they walked in all the commandments* And so must you too, if you would be righteous ; for how many soever you observe, unless you observe them all, you are still unrighteous persons. A thing which I desire you all take special notice of ; for many can make a shift to do some things : Herod himself did many things gladly ; but that will not do your business ; you had as good, in a manner, do nothing at all, as not do all that is required of you, to the utmost of your knowledge and power ; which that I may convince you of, and so, by the blessing of God, persuade you all to *walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless*, I desire you to consider,

1 All the commandments of the Lord are all, one as well as another, the commandments of the Lord. The same Lord that commanded any one, commanded all the rest. And so there is the same obligation upon you to observe all, as there is to observe any one of them : they were all written with the same finger, all published at the same time, all enacted by the same authority, even that which governs the whole world : and therefore must needs be all of the same force and power ; and that too the greatest that any laws are capable of, in that they are the laws of the most high God himself, who is King of kings, God of gods, Lord of lords, the supreme Magistrate, the universal Monarch of heaven and earth. It is he that has laid all these commands upon you. And as he sometimes commands you to

observe one, and sometimes another of them, so he often commands you to observe them all together. And now Israel, saith Moses, *what doth the Lord thy God require of thee, but to fear the Lord thy God, to walk in all his ways ?* Deut. x. 22. *Therefore shall ye keep all the commandments which I command thee this day,* chap. xi. 8. And so our blessed Saviour himself requires the apostles to teach his disciples *all things whatsoever he had commanded,* Matt. xxviii. 20. And elsewhere he makes this the character of his friends and disciples, saying, *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you,* John xv. 14. And therefore whoso neglects any of his commands, may be sure Christ will never own him for his friend, or a truly righteous man. To the same purpose Moses saith, *It shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us,* Deut. vi. 25. From whence it appears, that there can be no such thing as real righteousness, without universal obedience to the whole law : and that the neglect of any one commandment will hinder us from being righteous in the sight of God, although it was possible for us punctually to observe all the rest.

But indeed that is altogether impossible ; for he that lives in the constant neglect of any one of God's commandments, may be confident that he keeps never a one of them as he ought to do ; and the reason is, because they being all, as I have shewn, the commandments of the Lord, they ought to be therefore only observed, because they are his commandments ; for whosoever doth what God commands, upon any other account, cannot be said to obey him in the doing of it, as being moved to do it by something else besides his will and authority in commanding of it, which is the only ground of all true obedience. But he that keeps any of God's commandments only upon that account, because they are God's, he cannot but keep them all, as having the same reason for all, as he hath for any of them. As for ex-

ample : God hath commanded you not to take his name in vain, and he hath commanded not to steal : now if you keep your tongues from taking his name in vain, only for that reason, because God hath commanded you not to do it, you must needs keep your hands from picking and stealing too, because the same God hath commanded you not to do that. And so you have the same reason for this as you had for that : and if that reason prevailed upon you to do that, it cannot but prevail upon you to do this also. And so of all the rest of God's commandments. No one of them can possibly be kept by itself, without the other. But as they were all published together ; so they are either broke or kept together ; which made David truly say, *Then shall I not be ashamed, when I have respect to all thy commandments*, Psal. cxix. 6. *When I have respect*, that is, when I do not only do what thou hast commanded, but have respect to thy commandments, because they are thine, and so have respect not to some, but to all of them.

But that you may the better understand, and so be more fully convinced of, and affected with, this great truth, I desire you to consider that remarkable passage of St. James to this purpose, where he saith, *for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all*, James ii. 10. As if he had said, whosoever keepeth the greatest part of the law, yea, the whole, except in one point, by his offending in that one point, he is guilty of all ; of all, not of every one. For he that commits one particular sin, doth not at the same time commit every particular sin ; many sins being of that different nature, that they cannot possibly be committed together. But in that he is guilty of one particular sin, he is in effect guilty of all : for in that he commits that, it is plain that he doth not keep any part of the law as he ought to do, in obedience to God ; for if he did, he could not but avoid that, as well as any other sin. And if he had the same temptations to other

sins, as he hath to that, he would commit them too, and so is liable to the breach of the whole law. Yea, he doth indeed break the whole, as he that breaketh any one link of a chain breaks the whole chain. Or, to make it more plain by a familiar instance: suppose two men make a covenant or agreement upon certain articles or conditions, as suppose ten, to be performed by each party; if either of the parties break any one of these ten articles, he breaks the whole covenant, and forfeits all the benefits which he might have had by keeping it, as much as if he broke them all. So here the commandments are the conditions on our part in the covenant which God makes with mankind, if we desire to continue in his love and favour. And if a man should keep all the rest, yet if he offend in any one point, he breaks the whole covenant: though he be not so great a sinner as if he transgressed all the commandments, yet he is a sinner as well as if he did so; for he transgresseth the law, and so is no righteous person: for no man, in a legal sense, can be so, that doth not walk in all the commandments blameless; nor in an evangelical sense, unless it be his constant and sincere endeavour to do so. So that if you desire to be in the number, and to enjoy the privileges of righteous persons, you must of necessity make conscience of your whole duty, so as not to live in the constant neglect of any one command, nor in the wilful commission of any one sin you know of. For if you do, howsoever strict and exact you may be in other matters, you are still unrighteous persons, and, by consequence, obnoxious to all the penalties which the law threatens against the transgressors of it.

And that is the next thing which I would have you to take special notice of in this particular: even that God's blessings are promised only to such as observe all his commandments, his curses denounced against those that transgress any one of them. *And it shall come to pass, saith Moses, if thou shalt hearken diligently unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe and do all his*

commandments, that the Lord thy God shall set thee on high, above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, Deut. xxviii. 1, 2. But cursed is he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them, Deut. xxvii. 26. which last are the words which St. Paul means, where he saith, *For as many as are of the works of the law, are under the curse; for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them, Gal. iii. 10.* From whence ye may plainly see, that it is not your avoiding some sins, unless you avoid all; it is not your keeping of some of the commandments, unless you keep all, that can secure you from the curse of God; for he hath threatened it against all that do not continue in all things that he hath commanded. And therefore he that offends in any one point, is obnoxious to it, as well as he that offends in many. He is obnoxious to the curse, that is, to all manner of misery and trouble that mankind is capable of in this world or the next, and so to eternal death and damnation in hell-fire: it is all due to all, and every sin that is committed; to all, as well as to any, and to every one as well as to all. Hence the apostle saith, *The wages of sin is death, Rom. vi. 23. The wages of sin,* not only of this or that sin, but of sin in general, and so of all sin, one as well as another, death is due to it, as its just and proper wages, which it deserves at the hands of God, who at first threatened it only to one sin, but by that it was brought down upon all; for having forbidden Adam to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, he saith, *In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die, Gen. ii. 17* Not if thou breakest all or most of my commandments, but in the day thou breakest this one, *thou shalt surely die;* that is, thou shalt be guilty of, and obnoxious to, all manner of death, temporal, spiritual, eternal death. And so he was. By this one sin he entailed death, and so all sorts of misery, upon himself and his whole posterity:

so that one sin corrupted and destroyed the whole world, and brought all manner of troubles and calamities into it; and therefore we may easily conclude that it will do so to any particular person. Though you should avoid all sins but one, that one will damn you as well as all; one as well as a thousand. It is true, the more sins you commit, the greater will your damnation be in hell. But if you live and die but in any one sin unrepented of, you will still be condemned to the same place, even to utter darkness, *where is weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth; where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.* And therefore it will be to little purpose for you to leave off any of your sins, unless you leave them all off: or to keep some of God's commandments, unless you keep them all as near as you can; for you will still be in the number of wicked and unrighteous persons, and so the heirs of eternal damnation.

Hence, in the last place, Christ died for all sin, one as well as another; yea, it is very observable, that he is never said to have suffered for any particular sin, but only for sin in general. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities*, Isa. liii. 5. *He was delivered for our offences*, Rom. iv. 25. *He died for our sins*, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *He is the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. Not this or that sin, but the sin of the world indefinitely, and so all manner of sin that mankind can be guilty of. Which as it is the greatest encouragement, so it is the strongest argument imaginable, why you should forsake not only some or most, but all manner of sin whatsoever. For whatsoever sin it is that any of you indulge yourselves in, consider and bethink yourselves, it was for that very sin, amongst others, that Christ suffered not only shame and pain, but death itself; yea, the most shameful and painful death upon the cross. What? and will you take pleasure in that sin which put your Saviour to so much torment? live in that for which the

Son of God died ? continue to do that which brought the best friend you have with so much grief and sorrow to his grave ? God forbid. No. Let it never be said, that you prefer your sin before your Saviour, so as to crucify him afresh, rather than mortify that. But rather as he died for, do you die to, all manner of sin, so as to *walk in all the commandments of the Lord blameless*. Otherwise you may pretend what you please, but I dare assure you, you are not such righteous persons as these in my text were ; howsoever you may appear before men, you are not righteous before God.

This therefore is the first thing to be done, in order to your being truly righteous. You must look every one into his own heart, and search out every sin that hath hitherto reigned there, and do all you can for the future to subdue and expel it. You must leave and forsake not only others, but your own darling and beloved vices. You must be able to say with David, *I was also upright*, or, as the word signifies, *perfect and righteous before him, and I kept myself from mine iniquity*, Psal. xviii. 23. You must set all the commandments continually before your eyes, and order all your actions according to them. You must not allow yourselves in any one thing that God hath forbidden, nor wilfully neglect any one duty that he hath commanded you to perform. You must keep your conscience void of all offence, both towards God and men. As he who hath called you is holy, so must you be holy in all manner of conversation. In short, ye must walk in all the commandments of the Lord, and then you will have but one more step to true righteousness, and that is, to walk in all his ordinances too.

S E R M O N L I V .

UNIVERSAL OBEDIENCE REQUISITE TO SALVATION.

LUKE i. 6.

And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

WHAT these ordinances were, which Zacharias and Elizabeth walked in, we have shewn already; and from thence may easily gather what those are which we must walk in, if we would be righteous: for the ordinances which they observed were those of the levitical law, which were all positive precepts, ordained by God to make up the defects of their obedience to the moral law by the exercise of their repentance and faith in Christ; the great propitiation for the sins of the world. For these being the terms upon which the merits of Christ's death are applied to any person for the pardon of his sins; and for the acceptance of his sincere, instead of perfect righteousness, it was as necessary for them, as it is for us, to have some means of God's own ordaining, whereby to obtain and act them. And such, in the old law, were the sacrifices which they were bound to offer for the sins they had committed: and therefore he that brought this sin or trespass-offering, was first to confess his sin, and to testify his repentance for it. *And it shall be, saith the Law, when he shall be guilty in one of these things, that he shall confess that he hath*

sinned in that thing, Levit. v. 5. Numb. v. 7 And the Jews have a tradition, that this confession was made upon the head of the sacrifice which the person brought : for laying his hands between the horns of the sacrifice, he was to say, “ O Lord, I have sinned, I have done “ wickedly, I have dealt falsely before thee. Behold I “ repent, I am ashamed of my deeds, I will never do “ that thing any more.” Which was as high and solemn an expression of their repentance as could be well devised. And the Jews themselves acknowledge also, that the sacrifices were of no efficacy nor advantage at all, nor expiated any sin without repentance and confession. And therefore the prophets all along make repentance necessary unto pardon, notwithstanding all their sacrifices ; as, *Repent, and turn yourselves from all your transgressions, so iniquity shall not be your ruin*, Ezek. xviii. 30. and so frequently elsewhere. Indeed, this was one great end of all the bloody sacrifices, to put the people in mind of the heinousness of their sins, which could not be expiated without the shedding of blood, and so to put them upon an hearty and sincere repentance for them.

And as for faith, they had continual occasion given them for the exercise of that, in all the sacrifices which were offered for the expiation of sin : faith in God, in that they were offered to him ; and faith in the promised Messiah or Christ, in that they were offered for the expiation of sin. For they could not imagine that there was any such virtue in the blood of beasts, as to satisfy God, the almighty Creator of the world, for the sins which they had committed against him, and so could have no ground to expect or hope, that he would pardon them for the sake of a company of slain beasts ; but all their hopes of pardon were grounded upon God’s promise annexed to such sacrifices, as that was upon the death of Christ, typified and represented by them. For *it is only through his blood that we can have forgiveness of sins*, Col. i. 14. He is that true *Lamb of God*

that taketh away the sin of the world, John i. 29. that Lamb without spot and blemish, by whose precious blood we are redeemed, 1 Pet. i. 19. who gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour, Eph. v. 2. whose soul was made an offering for sin, or a sin-offering, as the prophet himself speaks, Isa. liii. 10. All other sin-offerings were only types and shadows of his : that which he offered, by offering up himself, was the substance, the true and real sacrifice which expiated the sins of the world. This they knew before as well, though not so clearly, as we do since it happened ; as appears not only from the prophet before quoted, but from many other places of the Old Testament. And therefore they believed in Christ as well as we. *Abraham rejoiced to see Christ's day ; he saw it, and was glad, John viii. 56. Moses esteemed the reproaches of Christ, greater riches than the treasures of Egypt, Heb. xi. 26. for the Gospel was preached to them as well as unto us, Heb. iv. 2.* And indeed, the chief end of their sacrifices was to put them in mind of that which Christ was to offer for them ; and so to give them occasion to exercise their faith, and put their confidence in him for pardon and salvation. And therefore these ordinances were indeed their means of grace, whereby they obtained the mercy and assistance of God for the pardon of their sins, and the acceptance of their sincere instead of perfect righteousness, through the blood of Christ, and his merits and intercession for them.

Now these ordinances having respect to Christ as to come afterwards, and so being fitted only for that time, before his coming in the flesh, they must needs cease in course when he was once come, and had actually offered up himself for the sins of the world : and it was then necessary there should be other ordinances instituted in their place, as the ordinary means whereby mankind might obtain grace, and the favour of God, through Christ, to the end of the world. And these we

are now as much obliged to walk in, as they were in theirs, if we desire to be righteous before God; that is, to come up to the terms of the Gospel, by repenting of our sins, and believing in Christ, so as that we may be justified before God, by his merits and mediation for us.

Of this sort is, first, the solemn hearing of God's holy word read, expounded, or preached publicly by a minister of his own, commissioned to do it in his name. They had something I confess of this before. *For Moses of old time had in every city them that preached him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath-day*, Acts xv 21. And so this might in some sense be one of those ordinances which they also walked in: but the Scriptures, especially such as related to our Saviour, were so obscure then, and wrapped up in such types and figures, that the reading of them could not be so effectual to the working in them true repentance, and faith in Christ, as it is now; when we have all the mysteries of our salvation by him, so clearly and fully revealed to us by himself and his apostles; whereby the hearing of God's holy word is now become quite another thing, and so great a means of grace and salvation, that many have been converted by the hearing of one chapter read, or one sermon preached as it ought to be: as St. Peter's preaching that one short sermon upon the day of Pentecost, about *three thousand souls were pricked in their hearts, and so repented and turned to Christ*, Acts ii. 37, 41. And after the same apostle had preached another sermon in the temple, it is said, *Many that heard the word believed; and the number of the men was about five thousand*, Acts iv 4. And while the same apostle was preaching to Cornelius and his friends, *the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*, Acts x. 44. Many such examples we have in the Acts, of those who were turned from darkness to light, from the power of Satan unto God, by the preaching of the Gospel, which St. Paul therefore calls, *the power of God*, 1 Cor. i. 18. And so it appeared to be, in that the greatest

part of the known world was by this means converted to the Christian faith. And to this day it hath the same power and efficacy as it ever had, as many have found by their own experience; and if it ever fail of having the same effect, it is not for want of power in the word preached, but by reason of some indisposition in them that hear it; the ground is bad, and then it is no wonder that the seed sown never comes to perfection.

And besides, as by this means men are brought to a due sense of their sins, and to a sincere repentance for them, so likewise to true faith in Christ. For, as the apostle saith, *faith comes by hearing*, Rom. x. 27 By this we are instructed in what we ought to believe, and by this we are enabled to believe what we are so instructed in: by this our faith is begun, and by this we are confirmed and strengthened in it: by this our understandings are enlightened, our judgments informed, and our hearts opened, as Lydia's was, to receive the word in love of it: by this, God is pleased to manifest himself to us, and to incline our minds to him, his own Holy Spirit usually working together with his word, to make it effectual to those great ends and purposes for which he hath ordained it. And therefore this is an ordinance which we must always walk in, as ever we desire to come to the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls.

Another ordinance is that of praying and praising God together, which in the Jewish church was joined with their sacrifices and incense; for every day throughout the year, they were bound to offer two lambs, the one in the morning, and the other in the evening, for a burnt-offering: and upon the sabbath, and other extraordinary days, they were to offer more; at which times the people were bound to be there, and they who made conscience of their duty seldom failed. Now when the burnt-offering began, the singers sang, the trumpeters sounded, and all the congregation fell upon their faces,

and worshipped and prayed, as we read in Hezekiah's time, 2 Chron. xxix. 28. So also, Eccles. i. 17, 18, 19. And this continued till the burnt-offering was finished: after that the priest went to the altar of incense before the veil, which the people without in the outward court having notice of, they all fell to their prayers, every one praying to himself, without speaking a word; and this continued all the while the incense was burning, which was usually about half an hour, their prayers ascending up to heaven, as they supposed, together with the incense. And therefore none of them offered to go away or leave off their prayers till, the incense being all burnt, the priest came out to pronounce the blessing, Numb. vi. 24. This David alludes to, where he saith, *Let my prayer come before thee as incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice*, Psal. cxli. 2. This being indeed their constant way of praying, they commonly reckoning no prayers acceptable to God, except they were joined with burnt-offerings or incense. But such offerings were themselves looked upon as praying, and called by that name, 1 Sam. xiii. 12.

These things I mention here, that you may understand their way of praying under the old law, and some passages also in this history of Zacharias: for it is here said, that whilst he was gone into the temple or tabernacle to burn incense, *the whole multitude of the people were praying without at the time of incense*, Luke i. 10. And afterwards it is said, *that the people waited for Zacharias, and marvelled that he tarried so long in the temple*, ver. 21. *And when he came out, he could not speak to them*, ver. 22. They had been at their devotions longer than the incense used to be burning, and therefore could not but wonder what should be the reason he stayed so long: howsoever they durst not go away till he came to give them the blessing; but when he came out, he could not speak, he could not pronounce the blessing, but only beckoned to them, by which they perceived that he had seen a vision; as he

really had, and was struck dumb with it too, to shew that the forerunner of Christ, being now to be born, and by consequence Christ himself to follow soon after, the levitical priesthood was now to cease ; that those kind of priests were not much longer to bless the people, but that this whole ordinance or way of worship and praying by typical sacrifices and incense was to be abolished, and another introduced in its room.

And so verily there was ; for praying under the Gospel is quite another thing from what it was then : for our prayers are now directed to God in the name and by the mediation of him whom all their legal sacrifices and incense only typified ; which theirs were not : for we seldom find them mentioning the Messiah in their prayers, nor to have had any respect to him, but as he was represented by their sacrifices ; whereas it is certain, that it is only in and through him, that any prayers that men make can be heard, or his praises accepted before God. This himself takes notice of, saying to his disciples brought up in the Jewish religion, *Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name*, John xvi. 24. But then he saith withal, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*, ver. 23. And again, *At that day ye shall ask in my name : and I say not unto you, that I will pray the Father for you ; for the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, ver. 26, 27. As if he had said, I need not tell you, or I say not only to you, that I will pray for you, that your prayers may be heard, but that my Father loves you for my sake, and for my sake therefore ye may be sure that he will hear your prayers. And elsewhere he saith, *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son*, John xiv. 13, 14. From whence we may observe, that Christ being now in heaven, and there appearing as our advocate before the presence of God for us, he takes notice of all the prayers

which are put up in his name, and takes care they be all answered, so far as what we ask is really good for us.

And that we may the better understand how he doth this, it was clearly described in a vision to St. John, when he saw an angel come and stand at the altar, *having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer it with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne. And the smoke of the incense, which came with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand*, Rev. viii. 3, 4. Where the angel is Christ, the golden censer his body or human nature, the incense his merits, with which he offers up the prayers of all saints, and so makes them effectual. Of all which, the incense that was used together with their prayers in the Mosaic law, was only a type or figure: this of Christ's merits is that real and substantial incense that perfumes our prayers, and renders them acceptable to God.

And not only our prayers, but our praises too, which always are or should be joined with them; for they also, by reason of Christ's merits and mediation for us, are accepted of as real sacrifices offered up to God by him. *By him therefore*, saith the apostle, *let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name*, Heb. xiii. 15. And thus it is, that instead of the typical and material sacrifices of the old law, we now offer up real and *spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Hence therefore we may see, how great an ordinance this of public prayer is, and how effectual a means of grace and salvation, especially as it is managed in our church, wherein all our prayers to God are directed to him only in the name of his only-begotten Son, all concluding with these words, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, or others to the same effect. Neither do we put

them up only once or twice a week; but as the Jews had their daily sacrifices, so we have our daily prayers, every morning and evening; and every time we meet together to offer up these our spiritual sacrifices, we praise God for every good thing we have, and we pray unto him for every thing we want, that can be good for us. And all this being done only in the name of our great High-priest, who is always interceding for us, and presenting our prayers to his Father with the incense of his own all-sufficient merits, if we be not failing to ourselves in acting our faith upon him, we can never fail of a gracious acceptance with Almighty God, nor, by consequence, of the manifold blessings that follow upon it. So that by this means we may obtain grace to repent of all the errors of our life past: by this means we may obtain a quick and lively faith in Christ our Saviour: by this means we may obtain the pardon of all the sins we ever committed: by this means we may obtain the Holy Spirit of God, to mortify our lusts, and to quicken us with newness of life; to keep us from heresy and vice, and lead us into all truth and virtue; to open our eyes, enlighten our minds, purify our hearts, and sanctify us wholly in soul, body, and spirit: in short, by this means we may be defended from all our enemies, protected from all manner of evil, directed in all our affairs, and endowed with all things necessary both for life and godliness, to make us holy here, and happy both now and for ever.

But for this purpose, there is another ordinance to be often joined with this of prayer, and that is, the ordinance of fasting, which though it be of no great power and virtue without prayer, yet if duly performed, it adds great power and virtue to it; as our Saviour himself plainly intimates, where he saith, *there are some kinds of devils, that go not out but by prayer and fasting together*, Matt. xvii. 21. and therefore they who would be righteous, must often walk in this, as well as any other ordinance. This being the great means whereby to

keep our bodies under, and our passions in order ; to clear up our apprehensions of spiritual things, and incline our affections to them ; to take off our minds from the earth, and raise them up to heaven ; to fix our thoughts in prayer, and to make our desires more intense and fervent. In a word, this is the great means whereby to cleanse our hearts from vicious and corrupt humours, and so to make them fit temples for the Holy Ghost to dwell in.

There are still two evangelical ordinances behind, without which, where they may be had, the other will not do our business, and they are the two sacraments, baptism, and the Lord's supper ; whereof the first was brought into the church, in the place of circumcision, which was no part of the levitical law, but an ordinance instituted long before Moses, when God was pleased to establish his covenant with Abraham, and to ordain this to be the sign of it, saying, *This is my covenant, which ye shall keep between me and you, and thy seed after thee ; Every male child among you shall be circumcised,* Gen. xvii. 10. *And ye shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskin, and it shall be a token of the covenant between me and you,* ver. 11. And from that time forward, this was the constant way appointed by God himself, for admitting any into the covenant with him, which covenant being established in the blood of Christ, in token thereof none were then admitted into it without blood, which was always shed in circumcision. But instead of that troublesome and painful ordinance, Christ hath commanded that persons be initiated into his church, and made his disciples, by being baptized in the *name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost*, Matt. xxviii. 19. Which is as plain and easy a way as could be found out ; and is not therefore to be slighted or neglected, but rather the more highly esteemed, and the more diligently observed.

As when Elisha bade Naaman the Syrian only go and wash himself seven times in Jordan, and he shall be

cured of his leprosy. Naaman at first was angry that the prophet required so little a thing of him, and therefore would not do it ; until his servants, being wiser than their lord, said to him, *My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldest thou not have done it ? How much rather then, when he saith to thee, Wash, and be clean ?* 2 Kings v. 13. So here, Christ only bids us wash, and we shall be clean ; and tells us withal, that *except a man be thus born again of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, John iii. 5. But that *whosoever believeth and is baptized, shall be saved*, Matt. xvi. 16. And therefore they who despise or neglect to do so easy a thing as this, at his command, have no more ground to expect to be saved by him, than Naaman had to be cured of his leprosy if he had not washed himself in Jordan as the prophet bade him.

But this is an ordinance which we cannot so properly be said to walk in, because it is to be done only once in a man's life. But howsoever, as Zacharias and Elizabeth took care to have their son circumcised according to God's command, so are all parents as much obliged to have their children baptized according to Christ's institution, otherwise they are not like those two, righteous before God, as not walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord, as they did.

The other sacrament is that of the Lord's supper, which our Lord himself ordained immediately before he was betrayed and apprehended, in order to his being offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world ; for all legal sacrifices being only types of his, and therefore to have an end, and expire together with him, our Lord was pleased to institute this, not for a propitiatory sacrifice, as the papists absurdly imagine, but as a commemorative sacrifice, to put his church always in mind of that which he then offered, by that one oblation of himself for the sins of mankind. *Do this*, saith he, *in remembrance of me*, Luke xxii. 19. By which means

this sacrament supplies the defect of all the levitical sacrifices, the paschal lamb, the sin-offerings, the trespass-offerings, the peace-offerings, the thank-offerings, the whole burnt-offerings, they are all now laid aside, and this one substituted in their place, of more power and efficacy to the ends for which they were ordained, than all they put together; for they only foreshewed Christ's death until it happened, this shews it forth to the end of the world: for, as the apostle saith, *as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death until he come*, 1 Cor. xi. 26. And that nothing might be wanting in this sacrament which was of any use in the levitical law, wheresoever it is administered, we offer up something of what God hath bestowed upon us, as a free-will offering, in acknowledgment, as of all the other blessings we have received from him, and hold continually of him, so especially of this, the fountain and foundation of them all, even the death which his only Son was pleased to undergo for us.

This therefore being that holy sacrament, which our Saviour himself substituted into the room of all legal sacrifices, and ordained in memory of himself, we must needs be obliged to receive it as oft as possibly we can. It is true, he hath prescribed no set times for it, as he did for the sacrifices under the law; yet however, seeing it comes into their place, it ought to bear some proportion with them in this respect, at least so far, that as they, besides their daily, had their weekly sacrifices more than ordinary upon the sabbath-day; so we should celebrate this holy sacrament once a week upon the Lord's-day, as we find the apostles did. And seeing Christ has limited no time for it, we ought not to limit, but extend it as far as we can, so as to lay hold of all opportunities that are put into our hands, of celebrating the memory of the best friend that we ever had, and the greatest act of love that ever was or ever can be done for us.

Especially considering the mighty benefits and advan-

tages that accrue to us by a due and worthy receiving of this holy sacrament. Hereby we are put in mind of the sinfulness of sin, and the dreadful punishments which are due unto it, seeing nothing less than the blood of the Son of God could expiate it. Hereby our minds are set against it, and our whole souls are taught to abhor and loath it. Hereby we exercise our faith in Christ, for the pardon of all our faults, and have them accordingly pardoned to us : hereby we wash ourselves over again, as it were, in the blood of the Lamb of God, which cleanseth us from all sin : hereby we derive power and virtue from Christ, to withstand the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil, and to serve God with a perfect heart and a willing mind : hereby we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us : hereby our repentance is renewed, our faith confirmed, our sins weakened, our graces strengthened, our hearts comforted, and our souls fitted to live with Christ in the other world : for as our bodies are nourished by bread and wine, so by the body and blood of Christ here mystically received, our souls are nourished and preserved to everlasting life : as, I hope, many of us shall now find by experience.

These are, in short, those ordinances which we must all walk in, if we desire to be like Zacharias and Elizabeth, righteous before God. Neither must we content ourselves with any one or more of them, but as we must walk in all the commandments, so we must walk in all the ordinances too : for they also are all commanded by the same Lord ; and therefore all the same reasons that oblige us to observe any of the commandments, oblige us also to observe them ; and the omission or neglect of any of them is as great a sin, and makes us liable to as great punishments, as the transgression of any other commandment can do.

And besides, these are not only commanded themselves, but they are appointed to be ordinances and means whereby we may be enabled to keep all the other

commandments: and therefore they who do not keep these, may be confident that they keep none at all, there being no way to attain the end, without using the means; all the means that are necessarily required in order to it, as be sure all these are; for otherwise they would not be required at all; for it cannot be imagined, that he who came into the world for no other purpose but to save us, should require any thing of us but what is necessary to our salvation. And therefore he having commanded us to be baptized, to read, and hear God's holy word; to fast and pray, and praise his sacred name, and to receive his blessed sacrament, we cannot possibly refuse or neglect any of these ordinances, without manifest prejudice to ourselves, and apparent hazard of our eternal salvation by him.

Neither must ye think, that the walking in any one of these ordinances will serve your turn without the other. He that walketh only part of his way, will never come to his journey's end. These ordinances are indeed the effectual means of grace, not singly, but conjunctly: not one by one, but altogether: they are all the way that leads to heaven, and he that goes not quite through them, had as good stand still, and never step into them; for they all depend upon, and influence, assist, and forward one another. By hearing God's holy word, we are made sensible of our sins; by fasting, we humble ourselves for them; by prayer, we obtain the pardon of them; and by the holy sacrament we obtain that pardon sealed to us in the blood of Christ. By hearing, our faith is begun; by fasting, it is quickened; by praying, it is increased; and by the sacrament, it is confirmed and strengthened; again, by hearing, we come to know our duty; by fasting, we are disposed for it; by praying, we are inclined to it; and by the sacrament, we are enabled to perform it: or, in short, take it thus: hearing makes us wise; fasting, humble; praying, devout; and the receiving of the Lord's supper makes us *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in*

the work of the Lord, assuring us, that *our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*.

What therefore will it avail you to observe any one of these ordinances without the other? Will that make you righteous before God? No surely. If it would, he would never have ordained the rest; but in that he hath ordained them all, one as well as another, it is plain, they are all, in their several respects, as necessary to be observed, in order to your being righteous, as it is for a patient to go through the whole course of physic, which his able physician prescribes, if he desires to be cured of his malady

Hence therefore I cannot forbear to advise and beseech you all, especially those of this parish, who are committed to my charge, that you would use all the care and diligence you can, constantly to walk in all and every one of these ordinances which Christ your Saviour hath ordained, in order to your obtaining salvation by him. I am very sensible, that I must ere long give up an account of my stewardship to my great Lord and Master, and therefore dare not but administer these means of grace to you, as often as the church or your necessities require it. You have the word of God read constantly every day in the week, and expounded or preached every Lord's day, and that too in so plain and familiar a way, that, I hope, the meanest capacity in the congregation may understand it. You have the public prayers and praises of our church read to you every day throughout the year, according to the best form that was ever composed by any church; you are put in mind of keeping your bodies under by fasting and abstinence, as often as the church requires it, or the common experience of all Christians hath found it necessary. You have the sacrament of baptism administered upon all occasions in your sight and hearing, to put you in mind of the solemn vow and promise which you made when you yourselves were baptized. You have the sacrament of the Lord's sup-

per administered every Lord's day in the year, and are as constantly invited to it, and exhorted to partake of it; and if there be any thing else that can conduce any thing towards the building you up in your most holy faith, and so to your eternal salvation, I shall be as ready to administer it, as you can be to desire it. And what defects Almighty God sees (as I am conscious to myself he sees a great many) in the discharge of my duty towards you, I hope, for his Son's sake, he will pardon them all to me, and make them up some other way to you. And therefore if it be not your own faults, none of you but may attain eternal life and happiness through Christ, in the use of these means, which he for that very purpose hath ordained, and caused to be so constantly administered to you, according to the order and direction of that most excellent church you live in.

But if you, after all, slight, despise, or neglect these ordinances, or any of them, I shall lose the pleasure of giving up my accounts with joy, but it is you that will feel the smart of it. And then you will wish with all your hearts, that you had neglected your carnal pleasures and profits, rather than prayers and sacraments. But alas! then it will be too late; wishing will do no good; you once had these opportunities put into your hands, but you would not make use of them. You might have heard the word of God solemnly and publicly read every day, but you would not. You might have joined together every day in praying and praising God, but you would not; you might have received the sacrament of the Lord's supper every week, but you would not; except perhaps when you had nothing else to do. How will the remembrance of this grate upon your consciences? How will it fret and torment your souls? What an aggravation will this be of your misery then, as it is of your sin now? So great an aggravation, that the consideration of it would almost tempt me, if I durst, to lay aside some part of these opportunities, so as not to administer the word and sacraments so often

as you now enjoy them. But alas ! I dare not ; it is my duty to administer them as I do, and therefore must continue it, and leave the event to God and you, as knowing that these are the means which God hath appointed for your salvation : and hoping, that although some by the instigation of the devil, neglect them, to their greater shame and confusion, yet others, by the blessing of God, will improve them to their greater glory and happiness in the other world.

All that I can do more is to admonish and exhort you to walk with Zacharias and Elizabeth, as in all the commandments, so likewise in all the ordinances of the Lord blameless. Do not take up with some without the other, not with any without all, nor yet with all, without walking blameless in them. Catch at all opportunities you can get of presenting yourselves before your heavenly Father in our daily prayers, and before your blessed Redeemer in the holy sacrament : and come with that presence of mind, with that simplicity of heart, with that humility, reverence, and faith, as becomes such sacred ordinances : and I dare assure you, your time will not be lost, but the best spent of any part of your whole life. For by this means your hearts by degrees will be emptied of all carnal and worldly thoughts, and filled with such a sense of God and religion, as by his grace and assistance will keep you firm and stedfast in his faith and fear all your life long, and so make you righteous before God himself.

How this comes to pass, even how by this means you will become righteous before God, is the last thing I promised to shew, and may easily do it : for although I do not deny, but that after all your endeavours to walk in all the commandments, you will offend in some ; and after all your endeavours to walk in all the ordinances of the Lord, you will not be altogether blameless in any, as not performing them with that perfect exactness as ye ought ; yet so great are the mercies of God, and so all-sufficient are the merits of your Saviour, that God

for his sake will accept of what you thus do sincerely, as well as if it was done perfectly ; and so, notwithstanding your daily infirmities and manifold imperfections, he will look upon you in his Son as righteous, and by consequence you will be righteous before him, or, as the word signifies, in his sight. He will overlook your infirmities, and take notice only of your sincerity, and that shall be *well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ*, Heb. xiii. 21.

This is that great mystery that is revealed to us in the Gospel, wherein as we are assured, *that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified*, or accepted of as righteous in the sight of God, Rom. iii. 20. so we are assured withal, that *we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ*, Rom. iii. 24. that *our spiritual sacrifices are acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. that *he hath made us accepted in his beloved Son*, Eph. i. 6. that *he who knew no sin, was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor v. 21. who is therefore said *to be made righteousness to us*, or, *for us*, 1 Cor. i. 30. and called *the Lord our righteousness*, Jer. xxiii. 6. The meaning of all which is, that although we be not perfectly righteous in ourselves, nor can be, so long as we are in the body, yet the only-begotten Son of God, in whom he is well pleased, having in our nature been obedient to death for us, God in him is well pleased with us too, and with what we do, if we do but sincerely endeavour to do what we can to obey him, and believe in his said Son, for his assistance of us in the doing it, and for God's acceptance of it when it is done ; for then God looks upon us, not as in ourselves, but as members of that body whereof his Son is head, and so as partakers of all the merits both of his life and death ; whereby our sins are not only pardoned, but all the defects and imperfections of our obedience are supplied and made up : that most perfect obedience and righteousness

which he performed to God for us being made over to us, and reckoned ours. In which therefore, although we be not perfectly so in ourselves, yet we appear as righteous before God, and he is pleased to accept of us as much as if we were perfectly so in ourselves, or rather more; the righteousness which we have in Christ being far greater than it was possible for us to have performed in our most perfect state.

Thus it was that these two persons in my text became righteous in the sight of God before Christ's coming; and therefore we cannot doubt but that we who live after it may be so too, if we do but follow their steps, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.*

And who would not be so, if he can? If he can, did I say? Who cannot be so, if he will? if he will, I say, but set himself in good earnest about it. Blessed be God, you are all as yet not only capable of being righteous, but you have all the means that can be desired in order to it. And if you will not use them, whose fault is it? Whom can you blame but yourselves? You must even take what follows, and thank yourselves for it: whereas if you be but willing and obedient, so as to seek the righteousness of God before all things else, and walk in all the ways that lead to it, you cannot miss of it, but may as certainly have this testimony as ever Zacharias and Elizabeth had it, that you are righteous before God.

And one would think, that you should not need many arguments, or much entreaty, to endeavour all you can after it: it being your own interest and concern, and that the greatest that you have or can have in the world, which that I may convince you of, I desire you to consider only one thing, and that is, that righteous persons are the only happy persons in the world, both in this world and the next.

In this world there are many, I know, esteemed very

happy: they that have crowns upon their heads, sceptres in their hands, and whole kingdoms at their feet: they that have stately houses, large estates, great possessions at command: they that are beloved and honoured by their neighbours, and have many servants waiting continually upon them: they that like Dives are *clothed in purple and fine linen, and fare deliciously every day*: they that feed upon dainties, drink the choicest wines, lie upon beds of down, and have their fill of all earthly enjoyments: these are reckoned the happy people of the world, in comparison of whom the rest of mankind are a company of miserable and contemptible wretches. But alas! what is there in all this to make men happy? Nothing certainly, unless men were like brutes, capable of no other happiness but what consisteth in pleasing their senses, gratifying their appetites, or tickling their disturbed imaginations. But true happiness is quite of another nature, and so far above the reach of such low and little things, that a man may be as happy without them as with them, and as miserable with them as without them. And therefore to find out those who are really the most happy people upon earth, we must search for such as have their portion, not in this world, but the other; for such whose bellies are not filled with hidden treasure, but whose souls are filled with the treasures of true wisdom and righteousness: for such as are *righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. These we shall find to be the only happy people in the world, in comparison of whom all the rest of mankind, howsoever they may think of themselves, or appear in the eyes of their fellow-mortals, are really poor and miserable creatures. As I do not question but you will all acknowledge, if you do but consider the great privileges that are conferred upon the righteous above all other men.

The righteous, and they only, are in favour with God,

the supreme Governor of the world ; and in so great esteem with him, that he calls them his special, his peculiar people, his treasure, his jewels. They have the honour of waiting continually upon him, and of enjoying his presence and the light of his countenance. They are nearly related to all and every person in the most sacred Trinity. They have God the Father to be their God and their Father, to take care of them, and to provide all things necessary for them. They have God the Son to be their God and their Saviour, to save them from their sins, and to appear continually in heaven for them, and to prepare them a place there, against they go out of this world. They have God the Holy Ghost to be their God, their Sanctifier, and their Comforter, to prevent their falling into sin, to assist them in their duty, and to support and comfort them in all conditions. They have the holy angels to minister unto them, and to keep them in all their ways. They have all the saints in heaven and earth for their brethren, their companions and fellow-citizens : they have the infinite wisdom of God to guide and direct them in all their affairs, and to shew them the way they ought to walk in : they have the almighty power of God to defend them from all their enemies, and to protect them from all danger and mischief : they have all things in the world working together for their good, and concurring to make them happy : they have God's blessing upon every thing they do, and upon every thing they have, to make it the best that it can be in its kind for them : they have all things that are good, and nothing that is evil or unprofitable for them : they have all occurrences, all circumstances, all conditions of life sanctified to them : so that if they fall into poverty, that is made better for them than riches ; and so is sickness and disgrace, than health and honour : they live under the immediate care and conduct of God himself, whose eyes are continually upon them, and his ears open to their prayers : they have free

access unto him upon all occasions, and are sure to obtain whatsoever they ask that is really good for themselves or others. *For the effectual fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much*, James v. 16. They are the salt of the earth, that keep the rest of mankind from being consumed; as we see in Sodom, if there had been but ten righteous persons in it, God would have spared it for their sakes, and would not destroy it till righteous Lot was gone out.

Thus the almighty Governor of the world hath a particular kindness for the righteous, guiding them by his counsel all the while they are upon earth, and afterwards receiving them into glory: for *the wicked must go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*, Matt. xxi. 46. So that after they have lived a few years upon earth, they are all translated to heaven, where they behold the glory, and enjoy the presence of the chiefest good; where they live with Christ their dear and blessed Saviour, and solace themselves continually in the embraces of his love and favour; where all tears are wiped from their eyes, all cares and fears are banished from their hearts, and all manner of sin and imperfections perfectly rooted out from their souls; where their spirits are made absolutely perfect, and their bodies fashioned like to Christ's glorious body: where they have the sweet and blessed society of their fellow glorified saints, and of the holy angels, being made altogether equal to them: where they have all things they can possibly desire, and so are fully satisfied with what they have; where they are as blessed as God himself can make them, and have all the honour and glory that he can confer upon them: where *they shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, Matt. xiii. 43. Where, in short, they live as cheerfully, as pleasantly, as honourably, as gloriously, every way as happily as it is possible for creatures to live, and that too, not only for some time, but for evermore.

Consider these things, and tell me, whether ye do not really think that the righteous are the happiest persons in the world? and whether it be not your interest as well as duty, to endeavour all ye can to get into the number of them? I am confident you cannot but all acknowledge it; and therefore hope that you will for the future act accordingly. Blessed be God, you are all as yet in a capacity of attaining to it; yea, more than that, you are invited, you are exhorted, you are commanded by Almighty God to *walk in all his commandments and ordinances blameless*, and so to be righteous before him. Neither do you want any of the means that can contribute any way towards it. These God hath been pleased to afford to you, and to all that live in the communion of our church, in a more than ordinary manner. Let me therefore beseech you in his name to use these means so duly, so constantly, so sincerely, so earnestly, that you may at length attain the end of them, that it may be said of every man and wife among you, as it is here of these two, that they are both righteous before God; and that the same may be truly asserted of all single persons, that you are not only hearers but doers of God's word, *walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. What an happy society, what a blessed congregation of people would you then be? shining as lights in the world, as all Christians ought to do.

For which purpose therefore, let me beg of you to imprint what you have now heard so upon your minds, that you may never forget it; but always remember, that as you can never be happy unless you be *righteous before God*; so you can never be *righteous before God*, except you *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*. But if you do that as heartily and sincerely as you ought, and as near as possibly you can, you will soon find it worth all the care and pains you take about it: for I dare assure you, in

the name of God, that he for his Son's sake will not only pardon what you have hitherto done amiss, but likewise accept of you as righteous before him, and by consequence receive you into his protection here, and hereafter into his own kingdom and glory, through the same our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ : to whom, &c.

S E R M O N L V .

THE GLORY OF GOD, THE FINAL CAUSE OF ALL THINGS.

PROV. xvi. 4.

The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

MAN being made in the image and likeness of God; so long as he continued in his first state, he had certainly as perfect knowledge of God, his will and his works, as such a creature was capable of. When all the fowls of the air and beasts of the field were brought before him, though he had never seen them before, yet he knew them so well, that he was able to give every one a name suitable to the nature that God made it of. And although the woman was formed of a rib taken out of the man, while he was in a deep sleep, and knew nothing of it while it was doing; yet notwithstanding he no sooner saw her, but he knew that she was taken out of him, and was *bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh*, Gen. ii. 23. These instances are left upon record, that ye may from thence see, what great knowledge man then had of what God had made or done, without any revelation or instruction, but was implanted in his own nature: he no sooner saw a thing, but he knew the nature and virtues of it, and the end wherefore it was made.

But the case is not so with us now. For by our fall, the faculties of our souls are so broken and disturbed, that of ourselves we know but little of this, and nothing

at all of the other world, but only in general, that there is another world as well as this: as it was long ago observed in the Book of Wisdom. Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth, and with labour do we find the things that are before us. But *the things that are in heaven, who hath searched out?* Wisd. ix. 16. We see the works of God, and wonderful effects produced every day; but as to the immediate causes of them, and how they operate, we can only guess: neither can we do that aright without much pains and study, by laying things together, and then gathering one from another as well as we can: and when all this is done, we are but where we were; for we are never certain that we guess aright. As others have been mistaken, so may we; so that we know nothing more certainly, than that we have no certain knowledge of the things of this world. And if we could not be more certain of spiritual things than we are of natural, for all our high conceits, we should be in woful case.

But whether we are sensible of it ourselves or no, he that made us knows our weakness and ignorance, and hath accordingly of his infinite mercy provided, that we may not be left to such uncertain conjectures about the affairs that belong to our future state; for he himself hath acquainted us with them, by revealing to us, not only what he would have us to believe and do, but likewise all that is necessary for us to know concerning himself, and what he hath done, and still doth in the world. And as what he hath not told us of, we may be confident it is no matter whether we know it or no: so what he hath been pleased to reveal to us, we may and ought to be as confident, that it is most certainly true, in that we have his word for it, who cannot lie. By which means we have the most certain ground that could be made, whereupon to build our faith and knowledge of all things belonging to our everlasting peace.

Now in those revelations which Almighty God hath given us, to make us wise unto salvation, he hath told

us nothing of the second causes which he hath established under himself, for the production of ordinary effects, that we may not perplex ourselves about them, but always look up to him the first cause, as working by them, or without them, as he sees good. But he hath told us plainly of the final cause or end of all things, that we may keep our eyes always fixed upon that, and accordingly strive all we can to promote it. This he hath declared in several places of the holy Scriptures, and particularly in these words, *The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.*

For himself, that is to exert and manifest himself, and his divine perfections, and so for his own honour and glory. Thus he himself explains that phrase, saying, *This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise*, Isa. xliii. 21. He formed them to shew forth his praise, and therefore for himself, or, which is the same, for his glory, as he himself expresseth it in the same chapter, *I have created him for my glory*, ver. 7. This is the ultimate end of all things; neither can we imagine any other that he could propose to himself in his wonderful works: for he being the highest, and the only good, in comparison of whom nothing else is good, he could aim at nothing but himself in what he did: nor at any thing for himself, but to shew forth the glory of his infinite perfections; that as he himself had been infinitely happy in the enjoyment of them from all eternity, so others also might see and praise him for them, by owning or acknowledging of them. This is all that creatures can do for him from whom they receive their being. And yet he is pleased to account this glorifying of him, *Whoso offereth praise, saith he, glorifieth me*, Psal. l. 23. For this end therefore it was that he made all things.

But the original word signifies not only to make, but to do; and so implies, that he did not only thus make

all things for himself at first, but that he still doth all things for the same end. So that whatsoever he doth, he doth it for his own glory, and will most certainly attain his end in it. But how that should be; how all things redound to the glory of God, is a subject too high for us to reach in this present low estate; the clear sight of it being reserved for the inheritance of the saints in light. But howsoever the better to raise up our thoughts and affections to our almighty Creator, we may offer at something towards it, from the consideration of his creation of the world, and his redemption of mankind. Under which two great works is contained more than we can comprehend; but we notwithstanding may see so much glory shining in them, that if we look stedfastly upon it, it will dazzle our eyes, and fill us with wonder and amazement, at the author of them.

By his creation of the world, I mean, his production of all things out of nothing; for by the world, we commonly understand all things that God hath made. But how many they are, is past our understanding: this globe of the earth we live upon is in itself a very great thing, being commonly reckoned above twenty thousand miles round; and hath an innumerable company of creatures about it, upon it, and within it, more than we are able to reckon up. And yet this is a very little inconsiderable thing, in comparison of that which we call heaven, where the sun, and moon, and stars are of all sorts and sizes. How many they are we know not, nor how great. It is beyond our skill to number or measure them, or describe their distance from us; and from one another, which is so vastly great, that we cannot so much as send up our thoughts towards them, but they are soon lost in the way. They who pretend to guess at it, suppose the sun to be near an hundred millions of miles from the earth, and the nearest of the fixed stars to be about thirty times as far as that from

the sun: what then shall we think of the prodigious compass of the whole heavens? How then can we think of it, without admiring him that made it?

But how was it made? That we could never have known, if he himself who did it had not revealed it to us: but he hath told us as much of it as was necessary, or perhaps possible for us to understand. He saith, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*, Gen. i. 1. In the beginning; before which there was not any thing made: and therefore all things must be made out of nothing. But how could that be? For, we must observe, that he tells us only in general, that he created the heavens and earth, or made them out of nothing; but doth not here acquaint us particularly with the way how he made the heavens afterwards, as he doth how he formed the earth: but in that this was done by his word, that be sure was done so too; as he himself also assures us by David, saying, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*, Psal. xxxiii. 6. *For he spake the word, and they were made; he commanded, and they were created*, Psal. cxlviii. 5. He only signified his will what he would have them be, and they were just as he would have them.

This we know because he hath told us of it, but he hath not been pleased to tell us what kind of bodies he hath given to the fixed stars and planets in heaven, nor what inhabitants he hath furnished them with, nor whether with any or no, except angels: and therefore it is in vain for us to enquire after such things: for it is impossible for us, whilst we are here below, to know any thing of them: we see many glorious creatures which we call the sun, the moon and stars, shining and moving to our appearance, from one place of heaven to another; but what they are, or how they move, we know not, nor whether they move at all; all that we know beyond what is revealed is only plain matter of fact: as that they sometimes appear lower, sometimes higher,

sometimes rising, and sometimes setting as to us : sometimes in opposition, and sometimes in conjunction with one another, and the like : and all this so certainly, that men, by long observation, have found out ways how to tell the very hour or minute when such things as these happened above a thousand years ago, or will do so a thousand years, or more, if the world shall last so long ; which some have been able to do, by supposing the sun to move about the earth ; others by supposing the earth to move about the sun ; and others again, by a supposition different from both them. And all these suppositions have been so well designed, as to serve well enough to solve all the appearances of this kind. And many other suppositions may be contrived to do the same thing ; but they are all but suppositions, without any certain foundation ; and they are all attended with such unaccountable difficulties, that I cannot imagine that any of them can be true ; but have rather cause to suspect, that they are all false, and to believe that this prodigious, unmeasurable fabric, called the world, consisting of heaven and earth, is actuated and influenced, as well as contrived in such a manner, as never yet came into the thoughts of any man upon earth, nor ever will. For it is impossible for us to see the springs of those wonderful movements, which our constant experience shews us to be in the world : we every day see the effects and consequences of them, but their causes are quite out of our sight. As God himself also intimated to Moses, saying, *Thou shalt see my back parts, but my face shall not be seen*, Exod. xxxiii. 23. We see his works *a posteriori*, by their certain effects and tendencies, but know nothing of them *a priori*. And it is high presumption in us to pretend to it, seeing God himself hath told us that we shall not, and our own reason and experience assures us that we cannot, seeing they all proceed from that infinite wisdom and power, which it is impossible for our finite understandings to comprehend : and therefore all that we have to

do in this case, is only to take notice of the works which God hath made in the world, and to admire the glory of his divine perfections, shining forth so clearly in them, and to praise him for them. This being the great end wherefore he was pleased to make them. For he made all things for himself.

Thus, therefore, God in the beginning created the heaven and the earth: he by his word made out of nothing the whole mass or lump of matter, of which the heaven, and the earth, and all things in them should be formed. So that there never was, nor will be one grain of matter more or less in the world, than was then made. And then he is pleased to tell us, as much as was necessary for us to know, of the way and manner how he proceeded in reducing this vast heap of indigested matter into the form it is now of. He first tells us, that what was afterwards called the earth, was then *מִהָרָרָה* without form and void, a rude confused lump of earth and water mixed together, without all shape and order, and without any inhabitants of any sort: *and darkness was upon the face of this great abyss or deep*, so that nothing of it could be seen, if there had been any thing to see it, but he that made it. But that his Spirit moved upon the face of the waters, or, as the word signifies, was moving or hovering, as it were, about to execute his word of command, so soon as it was spoken.

And the first thing he said was, *Let there be light*; and he had no sooner said it, but *there was light*. This was the first thing he made, that we might see his power, in making light to shine before he made the sun, which now is the fountain of light: and as the sun now shines continually upon one half of this globe of earth, and goes round about it in twenty-four hours, making day and night according as he riseth or sets in any part of it; so the light which was first made, had the same motions, making day where it shone, and night in all other places till it rose upon them: and this it did, as

the sun now doth in twenty-four hours ; so that the evening, when this light sat in any place, and the morning, when it rose again, was the first natural day, of the same length as ours now are, ver 4, 5.

The next day, God said, *Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters : and it was so.* The stately canopy of air that is over our heads, was immediately raised and stretched out all over the heavens, further than our eye or thought can reach, ver. 6, 7

The third day, God said, *Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place ; and let the dry land appear : and it was so.* For the waters, which hitherto were mingled with the earth, so as that no part of it was dry, they immediately all hasted together into one place, called the sea, so that the land appeared dry and fit for herbage. And then God said the same day, *Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit-tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself : and it was so.* For grass and herbs, and plants, and trees of all sorts immediately started up out of the earth, and covered the surface of it, every kind being impregnated and endued with such seed within itself, whereby to propagate itself, as it hath done ever since, and will do to the end of the world. So that not one of the species ever failed, nor hath any other been since made, but what was then made before the sun ; to shew, that although their growth now depends upon the influence of the sun, yet it did not so at first, but that God can make the earth fruitful without the sun as well as with it, ver. 9, 10, &c.

But the fourth day, God said, *Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven, to divide the day from the night, and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and for years : and it was so.* For at his word, that vast space above us, which we call the firmament and heaven, that hitherto was nothing

but pure air and ether, was immediately decked with an innumerable company of these glorious lights, the stars of all sorts and sizes; which, though they be at such an unfathomable distance, yet all give more or less light; especially the two that appear greatest of all to us, even *the sun to rule the day, and the moon the night.* Thus *by his Spirit he garnished the heavens,* Job xxvi. 13.

The fifth day, God said, *Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven: and it was so.* For immediately the waters were replenished with fish, and the air with fowls of all kinds, swimming and flying about in their respective elements. And God blessed them, and said, *Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the sea, and let the fowl multiply in the earth,* ver. 22. By virtue of which blessing, we see to this day what a prodigious increase there is of fowl and fish, above all other creatures.

The sixth day, God first said, *Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle and creeping thing and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.* For immediately out of the earth sprung forth all sorts of cattle, beasts, and insects, from the elephant to the mite, every one with full power, and so strong an impulse to propagate its kind, that all their several species are still in being, and some or other of them in all parts of the earth.

When God had thus made the earth, enlightened it, and furnished it with herbs, and fruits, and fish, and fowl, and cattle, and all things necessary for mankind, he then said, *Let us make man in our image, after our likeness,* ver. 26. He here changeth his phrase or way of speaking; he doth not say, Let there be a man upon earth; neither doth he say, Let the earth bring forth men, as he said of other living creatures; but he saith, *Let us make man;* and let us make him in our image, after our likeness. He speaks altogether in the plural

number, which cannot possibly be understood any other way, than of the three divine persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, all speaking to one another, and concurring in making man, not only as they are all one God, but likewise according to the distinct properties of each person, the Father as the Father, the Son as the Son, and the Holy Ghost as the Holy Ghost: they are all signified by the name of God, used all along in the creation, it being of the plural number, and joined with a verb singular: the Spirit of God manifested himself also in moving upon the waters: and the Father and the Son, in God's creating all things by his word: but in the making man, they join together, as it were, in council, and agree to make him in their own image, after their own likeness, in knowledge, and righteousness, and true holiness, Eph. iv. 24. Col. iii. 10. So as to be holy, according to his capacity, *as he who made him is holy, in all manner of conversation*, 1 Pet. i. 15. And gave him authority over all living creatures upon earth, in the air and sea: and the more to distinguish him from the rest of the creation, he afterwards describes more particularly, how he made man out of the dust of the earth, *and then breathed into him the breath of life, so that man became a living soul*, chap. ii. 8. A living soul; a soul that always lives, and can never be extinct, or die, after it was once united to a human body. And then he placed him in the garden of Eden, a garden of pleasure and delight, that he might live as happily as it was possible for a creature to live upon earth: and the better to vest him with authority over all other living creatures upon earth, God ordered them all to come before him, to perform, as it were, their homage to him, and to own him for their Lord and Master, which he then manifested himself to be, by giving every one a name, such as he saw good. After that, God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep, and then taking a rib out of his side, of that he made a woman, to be a meet help and companion for the man,

and that out of them might proceed the whole race of mankind that he designed should ever be upon earth. And though they were then both naked, the man and his wife, yet they *were not ashamed*, chap. ii. 25. Which is taken notice of, and recorded as a certain mark or sign of their perfect innocence, in that happy state wherein they were made.

Thus God made man, as he made all things else, for himself. He had exerted and discovered his infinite power in producing all things out of nothing by his word; and his infinite wisdom in contriving, ordering, and disposing every thing in the best manner, and to the best purposes that could be. But there was no creature upon earth, capable of seeing and reflecting upon these divine perfections till he made man. But he endued man with so much reason and understanding, and with such innocence and purity, that he was every way qualified to contemplate upon, admire and adore his almighty and all-wise Creator, and to adore and magnify him for those divine perfections which shined forth in the creation of the world; and so fully to answer the end of his creation, in ascribing all to his honour and glory, who was pleased in so wonderful a manner to exert himself, and express his essential goodness, that it appeared in all his works: for when he had made them all, he *saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*, Gen. i. 31.

But here we must further observe, that when God thus made the world, he did not make it so as that it should subsist of itself, neither did he leave it to itself, but still kept the government in his own hands: as he made, he still *upholdeth all things by the word of his power*, Heb. i. 3. so that his creation was not a transient, but a permanent, a continued act: *I*, saith he, *form the light, and create darkness*, Isa. xlv. 7. He did not do it only at first, but he is always doing it: *it is in him we now live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. Insomuch, that should he let go his

hold of us, and not keep us up in our being, we should immediately fall down into nothing ; which Job was so sensible of, that in his complaints he cried out, *O that I might have my request, and that God would grant me the thing that I long for ; even that it would please God to destroy me ; that he would let loose his hand, and cut me off*, Job vi. 8, 9. He knew that if God did but let loose his hand, so as not to support him in his being, he should the same moment be cut off, and cease to be. So necessarily do all the creatures upon earth subsist and depend upon the will and power of their Creator, yea, and the whole earth itself. As he made it, and hung it upon nothing at first, he doth so still, as Job again observed, saying of God, *He stretcheth forth the north upon the empty place, and hangeth the earth upon nothing*, Job xxvi. 7

This, I know, hath heretofore been questioned by some, and denied by others. But now all agree in it, since so many have sailed round about the earth ; for that could never have been done, if the earth did not hang in the air, without any thing but the immediate hand of God to support it. But this is no new discovery ; for here we see that Job, one of the oldest writers that is extant in the world, if not the oldest of all, knew it in his days. And we have here the word of God himself for it, that he now, as well as at first, hangs the earth upon nothing, holding it up continually by his almighty power, as he doth the sun and moon, the stars and planets, which we see hanging and moving over our heads in the firmament of heaven, without any thing else to support them but his hand that made them, and first placed them there, to shew forth the glory of his power, which appears so glorious in them, that we cannot but from thence see, *that the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work*, Psal. xix. 1.

Neither did he only make the whole world at first, and still upholds it by the word of his power, but he

sustaineth likewise all things in it by the power of the same word, and orders every thing according to the pleasure of his will ; so that as nothing was ever made but what was made by him, so nothing ever was or can be done without him. This, as I observed before, is imported by the original word in my text, even that the Lord did not only make, but doth all things for himself ; he doth all things ; whatsoever may be the instruments, he is the first cause of every thing that is done. It is true, now that he hath created the world, and established a series of second causes under him, for the production of ordinary effects, he doth not ordinarily act immediately from himself, as he did at first, without using some inferior cause or other ; but he is still the supreme cause, which did not only constitute all others at first, but still gives them all the force and efficacy they have, so that nothing can act without him, but he can do what he will without any thing else.

Hence therefore, whatsoever is done in the world, for the preservation and government of the whole, or any part of it, it is he that doth it ; *I, saith he, form the light and create darkness : I make peace, and create evil. I the Lord do all these things*, Isa. xlv. 7 It is he *who covereth the heavens with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains ; he giveth to the beast his food, and to the young ravens which cry unto him*, Psal. cxlvii. 8, 9. *He sendeth forth his commandment upon earth, his word runneth very swiftly. He giveth snow like wool, he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels ; who can stand before his cold ? He sendeth forth his word, and melteth them. He causeth the winds to blow, and the waters flow*, ver. 15, 16, 17, 18. Thus we read all along in God's holy word, that *whatsoever is done upon earth, he doth it himself*, by his word commonly influencing the second causes, so as to make them effect what he would have them ; and sometimes without

them, to shew that he is not confined to them, but can act either with them or without them, as he pleaseth.

This is a great truth, much to be observed, and always to be kept in our minds ; that we may never be tempted to think that any thing ever did, or can happen in the world, without him who made and governs it : but may still remember, that he rules and reigns over all, and doth whatsoever *he pleaseth in heaven and earth, in the seas, and in all deep places*, Psal. cxxxv. 6. Ordering and disposing of all things, from the highest to the lowest, from the greatest to the least thing ; that is, not only the public affairs of states and empires, or the greater concerns of mankind, but every thing that he hath made is equally under his care and providence. He himself has taught us, that although *two sparrows are sold for a farthing, yet not so much as one of them can fall to the ground without him ; but that the very hairs of every man's head are numbered by him*, Matt. x. 29, 30. And that not only such things as are the plain effects of necessary causes, but such also as seem to us to have no cause at all, but to be mere contingencies, or to fall out, as we are apt to say, by chance, even such things as these, are managed by the steady hand of his divine providence, to the same great and wise ends, for which he doth all things else. There being nothing so accidental unto us, but what is necessary in itself ; nor so little, but great things depend upon it ; what greater chance can there be, than in casting of lots ; yet when the *lot is cast into the lap, the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord*, Prov. xvi. 33. And therefore when the land of Canaan was divided among the children of Israel by Lot, Josh. xiv. 2. the Lord himself is said to have divided it, and to have divided it by lot, that we may know that the lots were disposed by him, Acts xiii. 19. And so is every thing that falls out in the world ; whether we see or do not see how it comes about, we may be sure it is God's act. It is he that doth it : and that doth it for himself,

so as to make it one way or other turn at last to his honour and glory.

This is that which we should now consider, even how the Lord made and doth all things for himself; or how all things that he hath made, or doth, tend to his glory: but here we shall be at a loss; for we can never dive to the bottom of this profound mystery; but must be forced to cry out with the apostle, *O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! For who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counsellor?* Rom. xi. 33, 34. We cannot see into the most immediate consequences of any thing that falls out in the world, much less can we see how all things wind and turn, and work together, till they accomplish the end for which they were designed; only this we know, because God hath told us, that all things serve him, by manifesting his infinite wisdom, and power, and goodness in the world; and that mankind was made on purpose to behold, admire, and praise these his divine perfections upon earth, as the holy angels do it in heaven.

And therefore we find that his saints and servants, even all such as study to answer his holy end in creating and preserving them, strive all they can to do it; as we see in David, crying out, *O Lord, how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all: the earth is full of thy riches,* Psal. civ. 24. *I will extol thee, my God, O king: and I will bless thy name for ever and ever Every day will I bless thee; and I will praise thy name for ever and ever Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised; and his greatness is unsearchable One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and shall declare thy mighty acts. I will speak of the glorious honour of thy majesty, and of thy wondrous works,* Psal. cxlv. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children*

of men ! Psal. cvii. 8. Yea, he calls upon all things in heaven and earth to praise him for his creation, and establishment of them by his word, saying, *Let them praise the name of the Lord ; for he commanded, and they were created : he hath also established them for ever and ever : he hath made a decree, which shall not be broken,* Psal. cxlviii. 6. And though we know but little what the saints and angels do in heaven, we know they praise God there, for the great and glorious works that he hath done, saying or singing, *Holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,* Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. And, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power : for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created,* Rev. iv. 11.

And though we of the church militant here on earth cannot do it so well as they who are triumphant in heaven, yet we ought to do it as well as we can ; especially in all our religious assemblies : this being the great end of our meeting together upon such occasions, that we may adore and praise God together, for the wonderful works that he hath done, and still doth in the world : and that is the reason wherefore our church hath so wisely contrived it, that a great part of our public Liturgy consists of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, setting forth the glory of our almighty Creator. And they who do not join with us in it, do not only deprive themselves of the benefit of our prayers, but rob God, as much as in them lies, of the praises which are due unto him.

But we must give glory to God, not only altogether, but every one apart by himself, for every thing that happens in the world, within the compass of our sight or knowledge : according to the rule prescribed to us, *In every thing give thanks,* 1 Thess. v. 18. For seeing nothing can be done without God, we ought to acknowledge him in every thing that is, and to praise him for it ; whatsoever he doth, proceeding from the same infi-

nite wisdom, power, and goodness, which he manifested in the creation of the world.

And this, indeed, is that which is properly called religion : so that as ever we desire to be religious indeed, we must live with a constant sense of this upon our minds, that Almighty God made and governs the world, and orders and disposeth of all and every thing in it by the same divine perfections, and to the same holy ends and purposes for which he made it : and therefore must ascribe all honour and praise unto him, for all his providential dispensations, one as well as another ; it was for this end he made us, and this is all that he expects from us, for all the great things he hath done for us ; wherefore, unless we do this, we do not answer the end of our creation, but live to no purpose in the world ; and then can expect no other, but that he who made us should be angry with us, and dash us in pieces, as a potter doth such vessels as are good for nothing : whereas if we glorify God in all things, we are always doing the work he sent us into the world about, and therefore continue always under his favour and protection, and have all things concurring under him to make us happy. For looking upon all things as coming from his infinite wisdom and goodness, we are always easy in our minds, and well-pleased with every thing that happens to us ; saying with David, *I was dumb, and opened not my mouth, for it was thy doing*, Psal. xxxix. 10. or with old Eli, *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, 1 Sam. iii. 18. and with Job, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away ; blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job i. 21.

But for that purpose we must glorify God not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourselves to his service. As he doth all things for himself, to his own glory, so must we ; *whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31 This is the only way whereby it is possible for us to serve him in the world, by promoting the same

end and design which he proposed to himself in the creation and government of it. And seeing he made us, as well as all things else, for himself, we are bound by the laws, and the end of our creation, to be as subservient to him as we can, in promoting his honour and glory in the world, by doing the business, and observing the commandments which he for that purpose hath set us, by vindicating his supreme authority over the world, against all that have the impudence to oppose it ; by resigning up ourselves wholly to him, and submitting to all that he shall see good to lay upon us ; by persuading all we can to enter into his service, and to join with us in admiring the wonderful works that he hath done, in extolling those infinite perfections which he manifested in them, in worshipping his divine Majesty with reverence and godly fear ; and in giving him the glory that is due unto his name, for his making us and all the world, and for his making us for himself, to glorify him for all the great things that he hath done, even for all things that are. *For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things. To him be glory for ever. Amen.*

SERMON LVI.

THE GLORY OF GOD, THE FINAL CAUSE OF ALL THINGS.

PROV. xvi. 4.

The Lord hath made all things for himself; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil.

THOUGH God was infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself from all eternity, and therefore could not possibly be any way better for any thing else; yet howsoever, out of his essential goodness, he was pleased to exert his divine perfections, so as that others also might behold, admire, and enjoy them; and so as that the glory of all he did, might rebound and return to him that did it: wherefore he is here said to have *made all things for himself; yea, and the wicked also for the day of evil.*

That I might give you what light I can into this great truth, I promised to consider the two great works wherein he hath manifested his glory; the creation of the world, and the redemption of mankind; under which all that he hath done may be comprehended; and from which we may easily discover, how he made the *wicked also for the day of evil.* The first I have already dispatched, by shewing how his glory appeareth in his making all things out of nothing, in his upholding all things in their being, and in his government and disposal of all things that he hath thus made and upholds. We are now to consider his other great work, the redemption of mankind, and how he did it for himself.

But to set this in such a light that all may see it, it will be necessary to open the way by shewing what occasion there was for his doing it: for which purpose we may observe, that man being made in the image of God, perfectly good, and fitted in all respects for the work he was made for, even to glorify him that made him; if he had continued in the same state wherein he was first made, there would have been no need of his being redeemed or made over again: but we find by woful experience, that man is now become another kind of creature than he was at first, an ignorant, a foolish, and ungrateful, an useless, a sinful creature; disordered in all the faculties of his soul, and in all the members of his body: averse from good, and inclined to all manner of evil; insomuch that God knows every *imagination of the thoughts of his heart is only evil continually*, Gen. vi. 5. By which means, of the most happy, he is now become the most miserable creature upon earth, good for nothing but to be cast into the fire, the fire of God's wrath, which is incensed against him, and ready every moment to devour him, in that he is no way fit for the use he was designed for: neither is this the case only of some few, but of all mankind. *They are all gone astray, they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doth good, no not one*, Psal. xiv. 3. And therefore *all by nature are the children of wrath*, one as well as another, Eph. ii. 3.

But how comes this about that we could never have known at this distance, if God himself had not caused it to be recorded in the holy Scripture given by his inspiration? But there we have the whole history of it attested by his own infallible Spirit; and the several parts of it explained in other places of his holy word: from whence I shall endeavour to make it as plain as I can.

When God therefore created the heaven and the earth, as he made man a reasonable creature upon earth, so he made other reasonable and intelligent creatures in heaven to be his angels, that is, his messengers or

ministers in promoting and accomplishing his end in the creation of the world. These he made without any sort of body, pure and perfect spirits, which being all left to their liberty whether they would continue in the same state wherein they were made or not, many of them chose to leave it, Jude ver. 6. 2 Pet. ii. 4. and so fell down and regenerated into unclean and wicked spirits, called, *the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41

Now man being made in a state of purity and perfection, like that from which these angels fell, they envying his happiness, contrived how to bring him down into the same wretched condition with themselves: for which purpose, the devil knowing *that the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made*, Gen. iii. 1 he, the better to cover his design, entered into a serpent, and spake by him, as he hath often done by those whom he hath possessed, and as the angels spake by Balaam's ass. For that this was the devil's act in the serpent, we have the authority of Christ himself, who therefore saith, *he was a murderer from the beginning*, John viii. 44. And the same appears also from the apostle, called the devil or satan, *the great dragon, that old serpent which deceived the whole world*, Rev. xii. 9. xx. 2, 10. for so did he when he deceived our first parents, in whom the whole world, or all mankind, was contained. And that this was known and believed by the old Jewish church before our Saviour's time, is evident from that remarkable passage in the book of Wisdom to this purpose; where we read, that God created man to be immortal, and made him to be an image of his own eternity. Nevertheless, *through envy of the devil, came death into the world*, Wisd. ii. 23, 24.

This subtle serpent therefore, not daring to venture upon the man, for fear of being worsted, he set upon the woman, thinking that she might the more easily be deceived; and not doubting but if he could get her down, the man would fall with her, as it came to pass: from

whence the apostle observes, that *Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression*, 1 Tim. ii. 14. that is, Adam was not first deceived, nor immediately by the serpent; but the woman was deceived by him, and was the first that transgressed God's command.

But how was she deceived? Why, the serpent said unto the woman, *Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?* Gen. iii. 1 He had heard, it seems, what God had said to Adam, and knew well enough, that, as it is written, *The Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it; for in the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 16, 17 But though the serpent knew this, yet the better to bring about his wicked design, he makes a question of it, saying, *Hath God said so?* *And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die*, Gen. iii. 2, 3. It is not recorded before, that the tree of which God spake, but only the tree of life, was in the midst of the garden; nor that he had said, they should not touch it; yet it cannot be supposed that the woman, being as yet in the state of perfection, would have said it, if it had not been so. But the woman had no sooner said this, but the serpent said to her, *Ye shall not surely die*, ver 4. Here he had the impudence to contradict God himself, and so to tell a plain lie, which was the first that we know was ever told in the world. But as our Saviour hath taught us, *when the devil speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own; for he is a liar, and the father of it*, John viii. 44. here he shewed himself to be so. But to mince the matter that it might go down the better, he pretended great kindness to the woman, more than God himself had; *for God,*

saith he, *doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil*, ver. 5. Here lay the main cheat, covered with a fair pretence of shewing the woman how to get into an higher state than that she was made in ; making as if by eating of this fruit, they should be so far from dying, that their eyes should be opened, and so they should be wiser and more knowing than they were before ; yea, *that they should be like gods, knowing good and evil*, whereas before they knew nothing else but good. And so far it was true, that this was the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, but not in the sense which the devil put upon it : for it was not called so ; because they who eat of it should know good and evil in the general notion of it, better than they did before : such knowledge they had before, otherwise they could not have known, as be sure they did, how to choose the good, and avoid the evil. But it was called the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*, to put them in mind, that if they eat of it they should know evil, as before they had known good, experimentally, so as both to practise and suffer evil, which they had not done before, nor ever should, if they had not tasted of that fruit. So that this was a plain diabolical fallacy and cheat put upon the woman, but such a one, that she was deceived with it.

For when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her ; and he did eat, ver. 6. That the fruit was pleasant to the eyes, she could see ; but that it would make one wise, she could never have thought it if the serpent had not said it ; she had only his word for that ; which notwithstanding she believed more than what God had said. God had said, if they eat of that fruit, they should die. The devil said, they should not die, but become as *gods, knowing good and evil* ; and

not believing God's word, but the devil's, she ventured upon eating it. So that unbelief was the first sin, and that which made way for all other: for if the woman had believed that in the day she eat of that fruit she should surely die, as God had said, all the devils in hell could never have persuaded her to have done it. But not believing what God had said, she did it, and had no sooner done it, but she found him to be true, and the devil a liar: for they were so far from being like to gods, that they became like to the devil himself, both in sin and misery.

For *the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked: and they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons*, ver. 7. Before it is said, that *they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed*, chap. ii. 25. that is, they were so perfectly innocent and free from all irregular motions, that they had nothing to be ashamed of. But now the case was altered; for they found themselves naked, and divested of their former innocence; were ashamed of themselves and of what they had done, and endeavoured to hide it as well as they could, but all in vain: for God's word must stand; they must die: yea they are, *ipso facto*, dead in law: the sentence is passed upon them; they are already dead in trespasses and sins; and every moment obnoxious both to temporal and eternal death.

Here then we may see, how all mankind fell from their first estate into that which they are now in: for these two were not only the first, nor single persons only, but they were all mankind then in being; and all men that should ever be were then in their loins. And therefore God called them both *Adam*, Gen. v. 2. that is, man in general, as the word signifies, because the whole species of man was in them; and all the individuals that should ever proceed from them were then present to God, and as much under his eye, as if they had been all then born, and were actually living upon

the earth. Hence it is that all mankind are guilty of the sin which was then committed; they are all corrupted and depraved, and subject to the death which was then threatened; which that we may not doubt of, God himself also hath assured us of it by his apostle, saying, *Wherefore as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. From hence therefore we may discover the occasion that was given, for God's manifesting the glory of some of his infinite perfections, which otherwise would never have been seen, even by his redeeming fallen man; which therefore he was graciously pleased to do the same day on which he fell; for in the cool, or towards the evening, of the day, Adam and his wife heard the voice of God in the garden, speaking to them, and asking them several questions, only to make them confess their fault with their own mouths, before he would shew them any mercy. The man confessed that he had eaten of the fruit of the tree which God had forbidden, but said, that the woman gave it him. The woman confessed, that she also had eaten of it, but said, that *the serpent had beguiled her*, ver. 8, 9, 13. Upon which the Lord said unto the serpent, *Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field: upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life*, ver. 14. This he said to the serpent into which the devil had entered, for that he had been the instrument of so much mischief; but as to the principal cause, the devil himself, who had entered into him, the Lord said, *I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel*, ver. 15. Here is no mention made of the seed of the man, but only of that of the woman: but God here saith, that there shall be such enmity between the woman and the serpent, and between their seeds, that the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent; and that the serpent shall

bruise the heel of the seed of the woman. Where, by the seed of the woman, is plainly meant one, who should be born of a woman without the help of man: which none ever was, but only Jesus Christ. And therefore to our right understanding of this promise, or first publication of the Gospel, it will be necessary to consider, how both parts of it were fulfilled in him.

First therefore we may observe, that this promise being made by God who cannot lie, and to whom all things are present, it took effect, as his word always doth, as soon as made, so that Adam himself, and his whole posterity, might receive the benefit of it, although this promised seed did not actually appear in the world till many years after. *But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman*, Gal. iv. 4. And if made of a woman, then her seed; but he was before that the Son of God: and if the Son of God, then God himself, as it was necessary he should be, who was to overcome so cunning and potent an enemy, *the prince of the power of the air*, who had been too hard for mankind in their most perfect state.

For this purpose therefore *was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil*, 1 John iii. 8. That he might undo all that the devil had done, by recovering mankind out of that sinful estate to which the devil had brought them, and enabling them to resist the devil and all his temptations, so as to force him to fly from them. This is that which we are to understand by his bruising the head of the serpent; his head, where all policy and his power lay; and so disabling him from accomplishing the mischief, which he designed and attempted against all mankind.

And, verily, he who reads the life of Christ, may easily see what absolute power he had and exercised over the devil and all his angels. They trembled at the sight of him; and cried out, *What have we to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of God? Art thou come to torment*

us before the time ? Matt. viii. 29, 30. And at another time, *Art thou come to destroy us ?* Luke iv. 34. They knew that he was the seed of the woman that was to come and bruise their head : as he did soon after ; and shewed his authority over them, by casting them out of the persons they had possessed, only with his word, Matt. viii. 16. Yea, a whole legion came out of two men at his command, and could not so much as enter into the swine without his leave, ver. 31, 32. Neither did he only do it himself, but gave his disciples power to cast out devils in his name, who accordingly did so, Luke x. 17 not only while he was with them, but when he was gone from them too. St. Paul only said to a wicked spirit that had possessed a damsel, *I command thee in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her : and he came out the same hour*, Acts xvi. 28. Yea, his name was no sooner spread abroad, but the famous oracles, where the devil for many ages had given his fallacious answers, immediately ceased.

And two hundred years after, Tertullian challenged all the Roman empire, to bring a man possessed with the devil, or with one of those which they called gods, and set him before any Christian, and if the Christian did not make him own himself to be a wicked spirit, the Christian should suffer what punishment they pleased. So confident were the Christians in those days, from their daily experience, that the devils were all subject to the name of Christ ; and so they have been all along, and are to this day. Insomuch, that in the relations which are extant of America, we find that when the heathens consulted the devil about any question, he could not answer them so long as any Christians were among them. And I have read the same of the Tartars in the east of Asia, that when by their usual charms they had got the devil to come to the place where they were, he stayed upon the top of the house, and told them plainly, he could not come in, because there was a Christian

there: for an Hungarian happened to be in the house, which they knew not of; but the devil, it seems, did: and dreaded the name of Christ so much, that he durst not come near any one that bore it. Which shews what a mighty advantage it is to be baptized into the name of Christ; and how justly they, who are cast out of the church, are said to be delivered unto Satan: they being then under his power, which before they were not.

But though the devil dare not openly appear among those who truly profess the name of Christ, yet he hath his secret ways of assaulting them, by laying traps before them, or baits to draw them into sin: but in this also Christ shews his power over him, in defeating all his designs; by enabling those who believe in him to withstand all the devil's temptations, and to get good by them; for by faith in him they are able *to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one*, Eph. vi. 16. But whatsoever they do of this nature, it is by Christ they do it. It is he that hath bruised the head of the serpent, so that the gates of hell, or all the devils there, can never prevail against his church, nor against any one sound member of it.

But as the seed of the woman was to bruise the head of the serpent, so the serpent was to bruise his heel: and so he did: he bruised his heel, his lower part, as he was the seed of the woman. As he was God, nothing could touch him; but as he was man, the serpent should have leave to bruise his heel, which was literally fulfilled in his crucifixion: for as his hands were nailed to the transverse beam at the upper end of the cross, so his feet were nailed to the upright piece of timber that was set in the ground, which could not be done without bruising his heel. So that not only his death, but his death upon the cross, was signified by this expression; that kind of death whereby he redeemed man from the curse which God had denounced against him for his disobedience. For, as the apostle saith, *Christ hath*

redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree, Gal. iii. 13.

But wherefore is the serpent said to bruise his heel, when they were only men that did it, by fastening him to the cross ? It is true, men were the instruments, but the old serpent, the devil or satan, was the chief contriver and cause of it : for it is written, *Then entered satan into Judas, surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the twelve. And he went his way, and communed with the chief priests and captains, how he might betray Jesus unto them, Luke xxii. 3, 4.* And he accordingly did betray him to those who crucified him. So that as satan entered into the serpent to tempt the woman to the destruction of herself and her whole posterity ; so he entered into Judas to betray the seed of the woman, to be put to death upon the cross ; hoping by that means to save his own head, that it might not be bruised by him. But here his policy failed him ; and the deceiver was himself most grossly deceived : for the serpent's thus bruising the heel of the seed of the woman, was the occasion and the means of his bruising the serpent's head. As the apostle also hath taught us, saying, *Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also, the Son of God, himself likewise took part of the same, (by being born of a woman,) that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil, Heb. ii. 14.* It was by his death therefore which he suffered upon the cross, when his heel was bruised, that Christ destroyed the devil, or bruised his head, so that he could not be able to exercise that power of death which he had gotten, by tempting man to do that for which God had said he should die.

For first, by this means he defeated the devil's whole design, by suffering that death himself which God had threatened, and therefore all mankind must otherwise have suffered. God had said to Adam, to man in ge-

neral, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die* : and he accordingly did so : Adam died that very day ; for the seed of the woman having the whole nature of man in him, was in the most proper signification of the word *Adam*, or man in general, as he is also called, 1 Cor. xv. 45, 47. And the promise being made the same day that Adam fell, he died the same day in the decree and sight of God, and his death had the same effect then, that it hath now. And therefore he is called, *the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. so as to *take away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. *of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. from the beginning to the end of it : which could not be, if the threatening had not been accomplished.

And besides that, he was the seed of the woman, being likewise the Son of God, his death was not only equivalent, but more than that which was threatened, of greater value than the death of all mankind ; in that it was suffered by a person who was God as well as man ; who therefore dying in the nature of man, united to his own divine person, did not only thereby take off the curse that was threatened, but merited all sorts of blessings for mankind. So that by him they also may be enabled to overcome the devil and all his temptations. As he himself told St. Paul, when he was troubled with *a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of satan, to buffet him*, saying to him, *My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness*, 2 Cor. xii. 9. Neither can he only bruise satan under their feet, Rom. xvi. 20. that they may be able to destroy his works ; but he can enable them also to work the works of God. *They can do all things through Christ that strengthens them*, Phil. iv. 13. And what they do *is acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. *Wherefore, as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19. Even by the seed of the woman, by his bruising the serpent's head, and suffering the serpent to bruise his heel.

After God had made this promise, which is properly called *πρωτευαγγέλιον*, the first Gospel, there are three things to be observed, which give much light to it, and receive as much from it. The first is, that although God cursed the serpent, and the ground too for man's sake, yet he did not pronounce either the man or woman cursed: he himself having prevented that, by promising one, in whom they and their whole posterity should be blessed.

The next thing is, that after this, *Adam called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living*, Gen. iii. 20. He had not given her a proper name before; neither could he give her this name after they were fallen; when they were both under sentence of death, and had no ground to expect to live, much less have any children. But now that God had promised a Saviour, and of the seed of the woman too, now Adam made no doubt but he should have children of the woman, and that their posterity should be as numerous as it would have been if they had not fallen: and therefore gave her a name that signified that she should be the mother of all mankind that should live upon the face of the earth. Which clearly shewed his faith in the said promise.

The last thing to be observed here is, that after all this, it is said, *Unto Adam also and to his wife did the Lord make coats of skins, and clothed them*, ver. 21. By making them coats, he confirmed his promise to them, and plainly demonstrated that it took effect as soon as made, in that he was now reconciled to them: and was so far from inflicting the death which he had before threatened, that he himself took care of their living comfortably in this world, by making them such clothes as might defend them from the inconveniences of the weather. But why did he make them of skins? herein certainly lay a great mystery, much greater than appears at first sight. When the man and the woman had eaten of the forbidden fruit, and then knew they

were naked, *they sewed fig-leaves together, and made themselves aprons*, Gen. iii. 7. The fig-leaves might in some measure hide their nakedness from themselves, and one another, but not from God: neither could any thing else which they could do hide it from him. And therefore he himself was graciously pleased to provide them a covering that would do it effectually. He had now promised, and so had raised them up a Saviour, of the seed of the woman, who by being bruised in his heel, or dying upon the cross for their sin, should expiate and cover it, so that he would take no more notice of it, than as if it had never been committed. Who therefore is called, *the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. But this Lamb being not to be actually slain till many years after, he slew certain beasts, as types and figures of it, and clothed the man and woman with the skins of those beasts; that having them always about them, they might better exercise their faith in him, who was typified by the beasts whose skins they wore: and so might have their sins covered, and their persons also, by his merits and righteousness; and each of them might say, as the prophet after did, *I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God: for he hath clothed me with garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness*, Isa. lxi. 10.

This, to me, seems plainly the reason why God clothed them with skins: be sure they were the skins of beasts, the first that were ever slain, and slain not by man, but by God himself. Which cannot in reason be supposed to be done by him for no other end but only to cover the nakedness of our first parents, or keep their bodies warm, when other things might have done that as well, or better than skins. But that he did it to cover their souls as well as bodies, by putting them in mind of that grand sacrifice, which he had just before promised should be offered up for the sins of the world. And this seems to be the original of that general cus-

tom of sacrificing beasts, that hath obtained in all places and ages ever since; which could not have been so universally received by mankind, as it hath been, if it had not come from their common head. But Almighty God having been pleased to foreshew how he would offer up the flesh, which he had promised to take of the seed of the woman, as an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of mankind, by slaying beasts, and then covering the first man and woman with their skins: he thereby sufficiently signified it to be his will, that the memory of his said promise should be kept up the same way, even by offering beasts in sacrifice to him, in all ages till it should be fulfilled. And therefore, although we do not find that Adam himself did it, his wearing the skins that God himself had clothed him with being a sufficient token of it to him; yet it is plain that his son Abel did it, and God approved of his doing it. For when Cain had offered of the fruit of the ground, and Abel of the firstlings, of his flock, and the fat thereof, God had respect to Abel and his offering, but not to Cain's, Gen. iv. 5. Abel's being such a sacrifice as God himself had ordained to represent the death of his Son: he thereby shewed his faith in the promise which God had made of it. And therefore it is written, *By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh*, Heb. xi. 4. He having offered beasts of the firstlings of his flock to God, as a sign of his faith in the promised seed, and being thereby accepted of as righteous before God, and called *righteous Abel* by Christ himself, Matt. xxiii. 35. *he being dead, yet speaketh*; he preacheth the Gospel, declaring to all the world, that God by the seed of the woman, even by Jesus Christ, hath redeemed mankind from the state of sin, and death into which they were fallen, into a state of righteousness and salvation: so that by faith in him, men may be made and accounted righteous again, and

so be restored unto, and live with him in paradise for ever.

This was the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. But wherefore did he redeem man in such a wonderful manner? he did it for himself. As when the children of Israel had provoked him, he *nevertheless saved them for his name's sake, that he might make his power to be known*, Psal. cvi. 8. So when all mankind were fallen under his displeasure, yet nevertheless he redeemed and saved them for his own sake, that the glory of his divine perfections might appear and be known in the world. He had discovered his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, and many other perfections in his creation and government of the world. But there are some of them which could not be exerted in such kind of works; particularly his mercy and truth. For mercy cannot be shewn but where there is sin and misery. Though he made all things good, and is accordingly good to all, yet he cannot be properly said to be merciful to any but such as have offended him and incurred his displeasure. Neither could he have shewed himself to be true or faithful to his promises, unless he had first made them.

But both these perfections, which otherwise had never been seen, shine forth most gloriously in his redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ. His mercy in giving his only-begotten Son to die for their sins, and in promising them all sorts of blessings and favours in him; and his truth, in the faithful performance of all such promises: wherefore it is written, that *grace, or mercy, and truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. They came into the world by him, and without him had never been seen in it: but in him God is so merciful, as to promise pardon and salvation to all that repent and believe the Gospel; and *in him all the promises of God are yea, and Amen, to the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. By us who believe, and so give him the glory of his mercy and truth; hence it is that faith is so indis-

pensably required in order to salvation ; because unless men believe in the merciful promises which God hath made, they do not answer his end in making them, but deprive him of the glory, and, by consequence, themselves of the benefit of them. Whereas they who live with a firm belief, and trust on the promises which he hath made of grace and mercy, he is accordingly gracious and merciful to them for Christ's sake, in that they give him the glory which he designed to himself by him. As it is said of Abraham, that *he was strong in faith, giving glory to God*, Rom. iv. 20. And God is said to *be admired in all them that believe*, 2 Thess. i. 10. who therefore *attain the end of their faith, even the salvation of their souls*. But *he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son*, 1 John v. 10. And all such not believing in him, by whom alone they can be made and accounted righteous, they are all in the number of the wicked, which the Wise-man here speaks of, saying, that he made *the wicked for the day of evil*.

Though he did not make them wicked, yet he made them, together with the rest of mankind ; and he made them all upright. And when they were fallen in their first parents, he gave them a Saviour, by whom they might rise again and become righteous, if it was not their own personal fault. And although he foreknew that they would choose to continue in their wickedness, yet notwithstanding he made them, but he made them for *the day of evil*. He made them, as he made all things else, for himself ; that his glory might appear in them : as he said to Pharaoh, *Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might shew my power in thee, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth*, Rom. ix. 17. Exod. xix. 6. So he made such as he foresaw would make themselves wicked, to shew his power and justice in them. How illustriously did his power appear in his destruction of the old wicked world,

by breaking up the foundation of the great deep, and opening the windows of heaven, that is, by letting loose both the sea and clouds upon them? in his consuming Sodom and Gomorrah by fire and brimstone from heaven, and in his causing the earth to open her mouth and swallow up Corah and his accomplices. There are many such instances of God's infinite power in altering the very course of nature, for the punishment of wicked men.

And how glorious will his justice also shine upon them all in the evil day' evil indeed to them, *when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power; when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and to be admired in all them that believe*, 2 Thess. i. 7, 8, 9, 10. And in all them that believe not too; seeing they would not give him the glory of his mercy and truth, he will shew forth the glory of his power and justice upon them. And so will have his glory one way or other from all.

Wherefore, brethren, you had best to look to yourselves. If notwithstanding all that God hath done for you, you will be wicked still, and not glorify him yourselves, he will glorify himself upon you. And then woe be to you. You will find it *a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God*. If he once take you to task, he will make thorough work. It is not your wit, or your wealth, that can help you. He will not lose his end in making and redeeming you: he did it for his own glory, and he will have it; either by your serving him, or his punishing you. The evil day is coming, in which his justice shall appear as illustrious in his destruction of the wicked, as his mercy in the salvation of the righteous. And therefore you had need take care before it be too late: there is no dallying with Omni-

potence. The almighty Creator of the world will make all men know that he made them, and that he made them for himself, to advance his glory; and if they will not do it, he will do it himself, by making them everlasting monuments, not of his mercy, but of his justice and truth.

Let us therefore now resolve, by his assistance, to set upon this great work in good earnest; now especially, that he hath not only made, but redeemed us to himself. *We are bought with a price; and therefore should glorify God, both in our body and in our spirits, which are God's*, 1 Cor. vi. 20. And let us accordingly make it the chief care and business of our life, to *shew forth the praises of him, who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light; and to give him the glory that is due unto his name*: the glory of his power, by worshipping and serving him with *reverence and godly fear*: the glory of his goodness, by loving him with all our hearts: the glory of his righteousness, by observing all his laws: the glory of his wisdom, by submitting to his will: the glory of his truth, by believing all that he hath revealed to us in his holy word: the glory of his mercy, by living with a sure trust and confidence on him for all things necessary to our salvation by Jesus Christ: and the glory of all his perfections, by our constant admiring and praising the wonderful works that he hath done: that when we go out of the world, we may be able in some measure to say, as our Saviour did unto the Father, *I have glorified thee on the earth, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do*, John xvii. 4. And in the mean while let us sing with the choir of heaven, *Salvation to our God that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb. Amen; blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever. Amen.* Rev. vii. 10, 12.

S E R M O N L V I I .

GOD ALONE TO BE SERVED.

MATT. iv. 10.

And him only shalt thou serve.

HE that firmly believes, and rightly considers the infinite power and all-sufficiency of the most high God, may justly wonder how it is possible for us, or any of his creatures, to do him any service : for what can we do for him who wants nothing, being all things in and to himself ? Wherein can we serve him, who is neither the better nor the worse for any thing we do, but is still infinitely happy in the enjoyment of his own essential goodness and perfections ? and yet in all his revealed will, there is nothing that he hath more frequently, or more expressly commanded us, than to serve him. And therefore how this may and ought to be done, is a matter that deserves our most serious enquiry. Especially considering, that all who have any true sense of God, being sensible withal of their manifold obligations to him, they cannot but look upon themselves as bound to do him all the service they can. And howsoever they may differ about the way and manner of doing it, that it ought to be done in general, they all agree. Insomuch, that whatsoever opinion or persuasion men are of in the matter of religion, they still pretend, or at least would be thought, to serve God in it : and yet, I fear, there are but few in the world that

rightly know what it is to serve God, much fewer that truly serve him according to their knowledge.

Hence therefore, that I may both clear up the true notion of it, and likewise excite you to a diligent performance of so great and necessary a duty, incumbent upon all men as men, much more upon all Christians, as such ; I shall, by his assistance, explain and apply to you these words of our blessed Saviour, which I have now read, and which were uttered by him upon this occasion.

The grand adversary of mankind the devil, having prevailed with the first Adam to eat of the forbidden fruit in the garden of Eden, and so brought him, and all mankind then contained in him, into a state of sin and misery, he had the impudence to set upon the second too, even Christ himself, after he had fasted forty days and forty nights in the wilderness. And his other temptations failing, at last he gets him up *into an exceeding high mountain, and from thence sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them ; and saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me*, ver. 8, 9. To which our Lord replies, *Get thee hence, satan ; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. As if he should have said, I defy thee and all the proffers thou makest me, being contrary to the revealed will of God, in whose holy word it is written, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, &c.* Upon which the devil, as despairing of victory, flies from him, *and, behold, the holy angels came and ministered unto him*, ver. 11.

But here a great question may be raised, in what place of Scripture this is written ? for we do not find any place in the Old Testament where these very words are written. All the commentators and expositors that I have met with refer us to Deut. vi. 13. where it is written, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him*. But I could never persuade myself

that our Lord quoted these words from thence ; for though it be there written, *Thou shalt serve the Lord thy God*, it is not written there, *and him only shalt thou serve*. In the Greek translation by the Septuagint, I confess the word *μόνον*, *only*, is inserted ; but I do not think it was put there by the Seventy translators themselves. For it is neither in the Hebrew, nor Samaritan copies, nor yet in the Samaritan version, nor in any of the Chaldee paraphrases ; neither indeed is it in the ancient Syriac and Arabic versions out of the Seventy. And therefore it seems to be rather taken out of these very words of our Saviour, and added there by some other hand, that so the place to which he thought our Lord referred might better agree with what he quoted out of it. For, so, many other places have been dealt with, as well as this ; and particularly that parallel place, Deut. x. 20. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and shalt serve him*. Some copies of the Seventy translate it, *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. But others, and particularly the Alexandrian, reads it, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve*. Which being the very words of our Saviour in my text, it is very probable that they were intercepted there, instead of the true version of the Hebrew text.

But that which prompts me most to believe that our Lord did not intend that text, in this quotation, is, because he quotes this Scripture to prove that he ought not to worship the devil, as he desired. But in the fore-said text, there is no mention at all of worshipping, but only of fearing and serving God. And to say, as some have done, that worshipping is implied in fearing, or the same with it, is so groundless and absurd, that it is not worth confuting. Be sure our Saviour would not produce a text to prove that which was not mentioned nor designed in it.

But where then is this written, which our Lord here speaks of ? I answer, in short, it is written in the se-

cond commandment; the scope and design, the sum and substance whereof is this, that we must not worship or serve any thing in the world as God, but only the Lord our God. And it is very observable, that the Greek translation of the Seventy. hath both the same words there, which our Lord useth in my text, οὐ προσκυνήσεις αὐτοῖς οὐδὲ μὴ λατρεύσεις αὐτοῖς, *thou shalt not worship them, nor serve them.* And what our Saviour himself, as well as his apostles, often doth in other quotations, he may well be supposed to do the same in this, even to give us the true sense and meaning of the text he quotes, in what terms he himself sees best. And certainly it is impossible to express the whole will of God in the second commandment more fully and clearly, than our Lord doth in these words, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Where the word *only* hath reference not only to our serving, but likewise to our worshipping too: as if he had said, *Thou shalt worship only the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Here therefore are two duties which the Lord our God hath appropriated to himself, commanding us to perform them to himself, and to none but himself, in a religious manner, *worship* and *service*. What we are to understand by *worship*, may be easily gathered from the Hebrew word used in the commandment, and from the Greek word both there and in my text. For the Hebrew word הִשָּׁתַּחֲוָה properly signifies to bow down, and so is commonly translated in that very place, as well as elsewhere, *Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them.* And the Greek word, προσκύνησις, signifieth the same too, even adoration; that is, such an humble and reverent inclination or bowing of our bodies, whereby to express our obeisance and subjection. By this it is that we actually worship; and therefore must do it in a religious sense to none but only to the Lord our God.

But that which I chiefly design to speak to at this

time, is the serving of God, which is all along in Scripture distinguished from worshipping, and yet is as much God's peculiar right and prerogative, as worship itself. Inasmuch, that to serve an idol, is altogether as bad as to worship it. And therefore that horrid sin of idolatry takes its denomination from hence, even from giving that service to an idol, which is due only to God. As Tertullian long ago observed, saying, *Idololatria omnis circa omne idolum famulatus et servitus*: all attendance and service done about any idol is idolatry, *Tertul. de Idol. cap. 3.* And so St. Augustine, *Idololatriæ dicuntur, qui simulachris eam servitutem exhibent quæ debetur Deo*: they are called idolaters, who give that service to images or idols which is due to God, *Aug. de Trin. l. i. cap. 6.*

When therefore it is said in the second commandment, *Thou shalt not make to thyself any graven image, nor the likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth; thou shalt not worship them nor serve them*; the meaning is, that as we must not actually worship any image or idol, by bowing or prostrating ourselves to it; so neither must we be serviceable, nor contribute any thing towards its being so honoured or worshipped; we must not assist at the making, erecting, or adorning of it; we must not build altars or temples, nor offer sacrifices, nor burn incense to it; we must not buy, nor sell, nor procure, nor fetch, nor carry any thing for that purpose; we must not keep any feasts, nor be present at any shews that are dedicated to it; we must not pray to it, nor speak, nor write in its praise and honour: in short, we must do nothing that may any way tend to its having divine worship performed to it, or to its being reputed or honoured as a God. For he that doth any such thing to or for any image or idol, or any creature whatsoever, though he do not actually worship it, yet he serves it in a religious manner, and so transgresseth the commandment of God, and is guilty of idolatry properly so called.

From this, the right notion of serving any thing religiously besides the true God, we may plainly infer, what it is properly to serve him, and him only, and so what is the full intent and purport of this divine law, *And him only shalt thou serve.* For hereby we are commanded in general to do every thing that we can, to promote the honour and glory of the true God, that he, and he only, may be acknowledged, admired, praised, and worshipped as God, as the sole Creator, Preserver, Governor, Possessor, and Disposer of all things in heaven and earth.

For the better understanding of this, we may consider, how that the most high God, although he be infinitely happy in himself, yet, as the Wise-man saith, Prov. xvi. 4. *He made all things for himself*, for his own pleasure and honour, in the exercise and manifestation of himself and his divine perfections. For this end it was that he exerted and displayed his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in the contrivance, production, and first establishment of the world: and for this end it is, that he still continues to preserve, govern, dispose, and order all and every thing that is in it. Not that he can be ever the happier in himself for any thing that he does or makes, but that his happiness and glory might appear to others, even to all such creatures as he for that purpose hath made capable of reflecting upon him, and of beholding and admiring that transcendent glory which shines forth in his creation and government of the world.

This therefore being the great end which Almighty God is pleased to propose to himself in all his works, so far as any of his creatures contribute any thing towards it, they may be properly said to serve him: for so far they do his work, and are subservient to him in accomplishing the design which he himself carries on in the world: in this sense all things in some measure serve him, because all things, some way or other, tend to his glory. *The very heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work.*

But as for reasonable and free agents, endued with understandings to know, and with wills to choose, what to do, although God will serve himself by every thing they do, by making it conduce, at last, to his honour; yet they cannot be said to serve him any further than as they choose and design to set forth his honour, and to express their acknowledgment of his greatness and glory; which is the only way whereby it is possible for his creatures to magnify or glorify him their great and all-glorious Creator.

Thus it is that the glorified saints and angels always serve God in heaven, by owning him for their Maker, and continual Benefactor, extolling his power, and confessing his goodness and bounty to them, as when they prostrate themselves before him, and cry out, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive honour, and glory, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created*, Rev. iv. 11. And when they call upon one another, and upon all the creatures in the world, to praise him, saying, *Hallelujah, praise ye the Lord*. This is to serve God indeed, when they do the work which he hath set them, and answer the great end for which he made them; punctually and cheerfully observing whatsoever he commands them in order thereunto.

But it is not so with us poor mortals upon earth, who generally live as without God in the world, hurried about with divers lusts and passions, whereby all true sense of God is almost stifled among us; and we are so far from serving God, that we commonly forget that we have any God to serve: but we have certainly the same obligations upon us to serve God upon earth, as the saints and angels have in heaven: and though we cannot do it so well as we ought, we ought to do it as well as we can, by making it our constant care, study, and endeavour, that he may be better known, sanctified, adored, and glorified in the world, and particularly in

the place where we dwell. And whatsoever we do that conduceth any thing to this end, he is pleased to accept of it, as of service done to himself, in that we thereby; according to our weak capacities, promote his great and holy design in the world; as we are expressly commanded to do, 1 Cor x. 31

Now that we may rightly apprehend how it is possible for us thus to serve the almighty Creator and Governor of the world, we must further observe, that as whatsoever he doth himself, so whatsoever he commands us to do, is for his own glory, which is the ultimate end of all his laws, as well as of all his works. And therefore all who sincerely obey and do what he hath commanded, may be properly said to serve him, not only in that they thereby declare their acknowledgment of the justice and goodness of his laws, and of his power and authority over them; but likewise in that they do those things which he himself hath prescribed and appointed for the advancement of his honour and glory in the world.

As for example, he commands you to love, and fear, and trust, and believe on him, for the honour of his goodness, and justice, and power, and truth. He commands you to be sober and temperate, for the honour of his image that he hath enstamped upon you, and for the better fitting and disposing both your minds and bodies to honour him. He commands you to be meek, and patient, and thankful in all conditions, for the honour of his wisdom and love, in whatsoever happens to you. He commands you to be humble and lowly in your own eyes, for the honour of his supreme authority, and absolute dominion over you. He commands you to be bountiful, and kind, and merciful to others, for the honour of that bounty, and kindness, and mercy which he shews to you. He commands you to be just and righteous in all your dealings, for the honour of that justice and righteousness which appears

in all his works, and to manifest to the world, that you really honour and prefer his love and favour before all things in it.

Thus we might easily shew, that whatsoever God commandeth, he therefore only commandeth it, because the doing of it tends to his honour ; and therefore they who do what he commandeth, do *ipso facto* serve him, in promoting the great end which he aims at in whatsoever he doth. But to demonstrate this more fully and clearly to you, I shall instance more particularly in some plain and necessary duties, and shew how truly and properly we may be said to serve God in the performance of them.

For this end, we may first observe, that the most high God hath always had, and ever will have, his church in the world, and hath instituted several offices and duties in it, on purpose to keep up the knowledge of himself amongst men. Insomuch, that it is only within the pale of the church that he is known, or worshipped, or honoured upon earth as he ought to be. Hence therefore all that enlarge, or defend, or do any thing sincerely in the behalf of God's church, may be truly and properly said to serve him, in that they contribute towards his being better known and honoured upon earth, than otherwise he would be. And hence it is, that God himself frequently calls Moses his servant, because he settled ; David his servant, because he reformed ; and Zerubbabel his servant, because he restored the church. And so for the apostles and first disciples of our blessed Saviour, who preached his Gospel, and propagated his church upon earth, they truly served the most high God in it, in that mankind was thereby instructed in the right knowledge of him the only true God, and of Jesus Christ whom he hath sent, and were taught how to give him that honour which is due to his sacred name. Upon which account, they also are called the servants of God, and the servants of Jesus Christ.

The same may be said of all at this day, who are any way instrumental in planting or propagating the church among infidels, or bringing them over into it: and particularly they, who take all the care, and do what they can, that negroes, and other infidels in any of his majesty's dominions, or foreign plantations, or elsewhere, be taught the principles of the Christian religion, baptized, and so brought into Christ's church, that they may worship and honour God there, they are plainly serviceable to him in a very high degree. And so are they too who vindicate or defend the church against Jews, Turks, or Heathens, its implacable or open adversaries; or else from real heretics or schismatics, its domestic and private enemies, who endeavour to undermine and corrupt it with opinions and practices contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel: for seeing it is only in Christ's holy catholic church that God is truly honoured and worshipped, whatsoever is done for that is done for God himself, and is an eminent piece of that service, which we owe to him our great Lord and Master. And therefore our gracious sovereign, as he is the *Defender of the faith*, and of the church established among us, upon that, as well as many other accounts, he is truly the servant of the most high God. And so are all they who, under him, assist in the supporting and upholding of our church in its doctrine, discipline, and worship: for hereby it comes to pass, that the knowledge of the true God is preserved, his prayers celebrated, and his worship duly performed among us.

To these may be added likewise, all such as contribute towards the building, repairing, adorning, or better fitting places for the public worship of God; or towards the maintaining and encouraging his ministers, who instruct and assist the people in the performance of it. For such places and persons being wholly set apart for that purpose, whatsoever is done for them as such, is done for the keeping up of God's honour and worship

in the land ; and therefore they that do it, (as all ought, according to their power,) may be properly said to serve God in it.

And as for the duties performed in such places, they make up so great a part of that service which we owe to God, that they have got the name almost wholly appropriated to themselves, being commonly called divine service ; and very properly too. Whatsoever is there done, by the appointment of our church, being so contrived and ordered, that it most clearly sets forth the glory of God, as being a plain and public acknowledgment either of his greatness and power over us, or else of his goodness and mercy to us..

When we confess our sins to God, and declare our hearty and unfeigned repentance for them, we thereby own his authority to give us what laws he pleaseth, and his justice and goodness in those which he hath given us, that we were bound in duty and conscience punctually to observe them all ; and therefore having broken them, we confess ourselves to be but as so many guilty malefactors before him, the Judge of all the world.

When we beg his pardon, and consequently receive absolution from him, by the hand of his minister, we thereby testify our acknowledgment, that we live in his mercy ; that it is in his power only to discharge and absolve us from our sins ; and to remit the punishment which is due unto us for them ; and that he will do it according to the promises which he hath made to mankind in Jesus Christ our Lord.

When we pray unto him, and to him only, for grace, or peace, or any thing we want, either for our souls or bodies, for ourselves or others, we thereby profess and discover our belief and persuasion, that he is the author and giver of every good and perfect gift, that we have nothing but what we receive from his gracious and bountiful hands, and that he, and none but he, can save or deliver us from any evil, or give us any thing that is truly good for us.

And if in our praying, much more in our reading and singing of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs or anthems, (which make up a considerable part of our public devotions,) we set forth his honour and glory, they being all composed and contrived on purpose to express our sense, and declare our acknowledgment of his greatness and goodness in himself, and of the great and good things which he hath done for us: by which means, we of the church militant here on earth, join with the church triumphant in heaven, in praising and extolling his great and glorious name, and so in serving of him.

Besides praying and praising God, we never come into his house but we have some part of his holy word read, and sometimes explained to us: which, in the minister who doth it, it is properly serving God, in that he makes known God's will and pleasure to his people. And though the people cannot so properly be said to serve God by hearing of his word, yet that being the means whereby to learn how to serve him, it hath a near relation to it; and indeed, their hearkening to what he saith to them out of his holy word, is a public owning their subjection to him, and their obligation to believe and observe what he commanded them. And as such, it may come under the proper notion of serving him.

But the highest services that we perform to God in his own house is at his holy table, where, in obedience to his command, we wait upon him to celebrate the memory of that death, which his Son in our nature suffered for us. In which duty we make open profession of our faith, in all the great mysteries of the Gospel, the most blessed Trinity, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the propitiation which he hath made for the sins of the whole world with his own blood. This is most properly our Christian service, which we, as his disciples, perform to our master Christ, and to God, as revealed in his Gospel. So that it is by this chiefly that we manifest ourselves to be Christians, to believe all the

articles of that holy religion which Jesus Christ hath settled in the world, and that we hope and expect to be saved only by his merits and mediation for us : which being so much for his honour, the ultimate end of this, as well as any other of God's commands, we may be truly said to serve him in the doing of it.

Thus, whensoever we come into God's house, we serve him there ; which is the proper work of the place. And therefore it is said of Anna the prophetess, that *she departed not from the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day*, Luke ii. 37 that is, as she constantly observed the fasts of the church, to keep both her mind and body in a right temper for it, so she constantly went to the temple at the hours of prayer, and there performed her public devotions to God. And therefore she hath this testimony from God himself, that she served him. And so, by consequence, do all they, who, after her holy example, daily frequent the public prayers of the church, or at least take all opportunities they can get to do it. For this is a public owning of God and religion : and therefore it always hath God's blessing attending it : insomuch, that he hath made the service which we perform to him in his own house, the ordinary means of obtaining grace and salvation, and all other blessings from him : as we see in the foresaid prophetess, who constantly attending and serving God in the temple, had the favour at last to see Christ himself there. In like manner, all such among you as constantly frequent the house of God, where his name is recorded, and accordingly worship and serve him there, God himself will most certainly perform his promise to you ; for he will come unto you, and bless you, and sanctify every thing you do for his glory, so as to make it conduce to your own everlasting good.

By this we may see how truly they also may be said to serve God, who take care of such places wherein he is served : it is of God's great goodness to this kingdom, that there is not a parish in it but some part of it is

dedicated to him, and he hath caused an house to be built upon it for himself, where all that live within the limits of that parish may meet and serve, as well as worship him together. Now all that are entrusted with the oversight of their houses of God in the land, if they faithfully discharge their trust, in taking effectual care within these several dioceses or jurisdictions that they be kept in good repair, fit for the service of God, and that his service be duly and regularly performed in them, they cannot but be acknowledged to serve him in it. Whereas they who neglect their duty in this particular, do not only betray the trust reposed in them, but plainly demonstrate to the world, that they care not whether God be served or no, and must expect to find accordingly when they come to give up their accounts to him.

But we must not think, that because the houses of God are appropriated to his service, therefore his service should be confined to them: as if we were never bound to serve God, but when we come to church. For that we are obliged to do wheresoever we are, by taking all the care, and using all the means we can, that others also, especially such as we have any power over, may know, and honour, and worship him as they ought; that they may *turn from darkness to light, from the power of satan unto God*: which is so great a piece of service to him, that God hath promised an extraordinary reward to them who do it, assuring us, that *they who turn many to righteousness, shall shine as stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. that is, they shall be advanced to more than ordinary degrees of glory in the other world. And the reason is, because they do not only serve God, by promoting his honour themselves, but likewise in persuading others to it: and therefore shall partake of all the blessings which attend the services which those others do him, as well as their own.

And so for those, who reprove, correct, or execute their civil or ecclesiastical punishments upon notorious and scandalous offenders; that blaspheme God's most

holy name, break his laws, deride his religion, and refuse and neglect his service and worship ; they, I say, who punish such people, plainly serve God in the doing of it ; for they do but inflict the penalties which he himself hath threatened against such profane and wicked wretches. And therefore the supreme magistrate is said to be the minister and servant of God, *a revenger to execute the wrath upon him that doth evil*, Rom. xiii. 4. And so not only the king himself, but all who, by virtue of any commission from him, put the law in execution against such notorious malefactors, they are therein the ministers or servants of God too, in that they execute the laws which he hath established to keep up the fear, and dread, and honour of his great name amongst us.

And as they serve God by punishing of vice and wickedness, so likewise by rewarding and encouraging virtue and goodness where they find it. For hereby they excite and stir up others to please, honour, and obey God, and so to answer God's end in his creation, preservation, and redemption of them.

Another great piece of service which both magistrates and all others are bound to perform to God, is by using the utmost of their skill and power in preventing or suppressing schism, sedition, riots, tumults, and contentions, so as to promote and settle peace and quietness in the government under which they live. For St. Paul himself saith, that they *who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine of the Gospel, serve not the Lord Jesus Christ, but their own bellies*, Rom. xvi. 17, 18. Indeed, it is a great shame and reproach to our holy religion, that they who profess it, should act so directly contrary to it, and so give too much occasion to the enemies of our Lord to blaspheme his most sacred name, and so do him all the disservice they can : and therefore they who are not only peaceable themselves, but do all they can to make others so too, are not only the great patriots of their country,

but the servants of God ; who being a God of peace and love, all that promote love and peace in the world, plainly serve him in it ; and are so high in his love and favour for it, that he looks upon them not only as his servants, but his children too : and hath entailed a special blessing upon them with his own mouth, saying, *Blessed are the peace-makers ; for they shall be called the children of God*, Matt. v. 9.

And besides that, they who by their counsel, valour, courage, or conduct, are instrumental in procuring, or establishing the peace of the kingdom, give thereby an opportunity to themselves and others to serve God quietly and peaceably in their particular callings and stations, by providing not only what is necessary for their own families, but likewise wherewith to assist and relieve such as are in distress and want : and what is done for such, God looks upon as done for himself ; *Verily*. saith our Lord, *I say unto you, In that ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me*, Matt. xxv. 40. And the reason is, because God hath promised to provide for the poor and indigent ; and therefore what is done for them, is done also for him, in that it redounds to the honour and glory of his truth and faithfulness in fulfilling his promise to them.

Hence therefore, all that take care of poor widows and orphans ; all that support the weak, heal the sick, relieve the oppressed, or comfort the disconsolate ; all that feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, or redeem captives out of slavery and bondage ; and all that contribute any thing towards these and such-like pious and charitable uses, they so far do God's own work, and are his servants in doing that which he himself hath promised to do. But as for those who do not only supply their present necessities, but erect schools or colleges for the education of youth ; or hospitals, or alms-houses for poor widows and fatherless children, for the sick or maimed, or decrepid, or any sort of needy

and impotent persons, and endow the said places with a competent revenue for such good uses, they do not only serve God while they are in this world, but when they are gone out of it too. The estates which God gave them being still employed in his service upon earth, though they themselves be gone to heaven; which doubtless is no small addition to their joy and comfort there.

And as we are thus to serve God with our estates, so with our lives too; not only by ordering them according to his holy and wise laws, but likewise by laying them down, if there be occasion, for his honour and glory; which rightly and sincerely performed, is the greatest service that we can ever do him; forasmuch as it is parting with the dearest thing that we have in the world for his sake. Thus it was that the primitive Christians served the almighty Creator of the world, when they chose rather to suffer the most cruel death that wit or malice could invent, than deny him, or do any thing whereby they might seem to own any other God. And therefore they were honoured with the title of his martyrs or witnesses, because they attested his honour and sovereignty over the world, and sealed it too with their own blood. And whosoever shall thus openly and resolutely confess the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, before men, so as cheerfully to suffer not only shame, and pain, and imprisonment, slavery, and confiscation of goods, and the like, but even death itself, merely for his sake, and as their testimony to the truth of his holy Gospel, they thereby give the clearest demonstration that is possible of their belief of his supreme authority over the world, and of all the great mysteries which he hath revealed to us in the Gospel of Christ, and so do him the highest service they can upon earth, and by consequence shall receive a proportionable reward in heaven.

These are some of those many ways, whereby we may truly and properly be said to serve God, in that we set

forth his glory, and express our faith and fear of his great name, and our acknowledgment of those infinite perfections which are concentrated in his nature, and displayed in all his works. For hereby we are plainly subservient to him, in carrying on and accomplishing the great end that he proposed to himself in his creation and government of the world, and likewise in his redemption of mankind by the blood of his own Son. Which therefore we are all bound to be, in the highest manner that we can, by using these and all other means that may any way tend to that most wise and holy end. As be sure all true grace and virtue some way or other doth ; so that if we exercise and employ ourselves continually therein, as we ought, our whole lives will be spent in his service in whom we live ; for hereby, as the prophet Zacharias words it, we shall *serve him without fear in holiness and righteousness before him all the days of our life*, Luke i. 74, 75.

Now, having thus briefly put you in mind, how we may all serve Almighty God himself, if ye will ; I might use some arguments whereby to persuade you' to be as willing as ye are able to do it. But that, I hope, will be altogether needless, especially as to you, who know it to be both your honour and your interest, as well as duty : ye cannot but acknowledge it to be a very great honour to serve a great king or emperor upon earth ; but what an honour then must it needs be, to serve the King of all kings, the universal Monarch of heaven and earth, who is greatness and excellency itself ? His service doubtless is not only perfect freedom, but perfect honour too ; the greatest that creatures can ever be invested with ; for it is doing the work of their Creator himself : it is honouring him : and they that honour him, are sure to be honoured by him : for they have his own word for it, saying, *Them that honour me, I will honour*, 1 Sam. ii. 30. John xii. 26. and how honourable must that man be, whom God himself delights to honour ? yet this honour have all the saints, and ser-

vants of the most high God: who honours them so highly, as to call them not only his servants, but his children, his friends, his peculiar people, his treasure, his jewels: which are such titles of honour, that none but God himself can give, and none but his servants can receive. Wherefore as ever you desire to be advanced to this real, substantial, eternal honour, so as to be honoured not only by men and angels, and the whole court of heaven, but by God himself, the fountain of all true honour; do but devote yourselves to his service, and it will be immediately conferred upon you.

Neither will this be only for your honour, but for your interest too: for they who serve God, as they serve the greatest, they serve the best master in the world. One who never suffers his implacable enemies to go unpunished, nor his faithful servants unrewarded. It is true, when we have done all we can for him, we are still but unprofitable servants: we have done no more than what was our duty to do: yet howsoever, so infinitely good, and kind, and gracious is he to those who do him true and faithful service, that he thinks nothing too much, nothing too good for them; but makes all things work together for their good. Insomuch that they who serve God, have all things else to serve them. And what is wanting in his creatures to make them completely happy, he himself will make up out of the inexhaustible treasure of his own infinite goodness and felicity. So that although all the services they can do him be but very imperfect, and come far short of what they owe him, yet he is graciously pleased, for his Son's sake, not only to accept of them, but to reward them also with a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.

But we must remember, that whether we could get any thing by it or no, it is still our duty to serve him who made us, and who made us on purpose to serve him; and hath expressly commanded us to do it. And therefore they who live in the constant neglect of it, do what they can to frustrate the very end of their crea-

tion, being mere ciphers in the world, coming in, and going out of it again, without ever doing the work they were made for ; and therefore can expect no other, but that he that made them, should be for ever displeased with them. And what will be the effects and consequences of that, I leave you to judge.

But, I hope, ye will never make trial of it. But that now you have heard how you both may and ought to serve the Lord your God, and him only, you will for the future do it, to the uttermost of your knowledge and power, by employing and improving your parts and learning, your wisdom and policy, your estates, authority, interest, and whatsoever talents he hath put into your hands, wholly and solely for his honour and glory, that your *light may so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* Which if ye do, I speak in his name, he will most certainly guide, assist, and bless you while ye live, and when ye die, he will receive you to himself, saying, *Well done good and faithful servants, enter ye into the joy of your Lord.* Where ye will live in the greatest splendor and glory, and enjoy the greatest comfort and happiness, that creatures are capable of ; and all through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ our Lord ; to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory given of us, and of all the creatures in the world, from this time forth and for evermore. Amen.

SERMON LVIII.

THE ADVANTAGES OF PUBLIC WORSHIP.

PSAL. cxxii. 1

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

THUS saith the Lord, *The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest?* Isa. lxvi. 1 Whereby it hath pleased his divine goodness to signify to us, that he lives and reigns on high, infinitely above all that we can think, and that the earth is at his foot, to do what he will with it, and with every thing that is in it, or upon it. So that the whole earth is full of his glory, and the heaven of heavens is not able to contain it. Where then shall we build an house? Where shall we find a place for him to dwell in? Nowhere certainly, so as that he should be included in it. Yet nevertheless, as he is said to dwell in heaven, because he there unveils himself, and shines forth in all his glory, before those pure and holy creatures that dwell there, and are capable of beholding it: so he is said to dwell in such places upon earth too, where he is graciously pleased to manifest himself, and discover any of his divine perfections in a more peculiar manner than he doth elsewhere: as he is often said to dwell between the cherubiims over the mercy-seat, or covering of the ark, from whence he was pleased to manifest his glory, and make known his will unto his people. And whereso-

ever the ark was, there he was said to dwell. So long as it was in the tabernacle, which Moses by his appointment made for it, that was called his house or dwelling-place, because he there met with his people, and acquainted them with his pleasure. And when the ark was put into the temple which Solomon built for it upon mount Sion, that was called his house, not only in the Old Testament, but in the New, by Christ himself, John ii. 16.

This therefore is that which the Psalmist here calls, *the house of the Lord*, even the place where the ark then was, and where the Lord had therefore promised to be, in a special manner. Thither all the men in Israel were bound to go, at least three times every year, though many of them lived about an hundred miles off. And some have thought that this Psalm was composed for that occasion, that the people might better express the joy and pleasure they had in that holy journey, saying or singing to one another as they went, *I was glad, or rejoiced, when they said unto me, We will, or Let us go into the house of the Lord. Our feet shall stand in thy gates, O Jerusalem. Jerusalem is built as a city that is at unity in itself, for thither the tribes go up, even the tribes of the Lord, to testify unto Israel, to give thanks to the name of the Lord, &c.*

But it might serve as well for those who, living near it, went every day to the house of the Lord, to perform their devotions to him, and to receive his blessing; as all that were truly pious did. They took all opportunities they could get, of going thither at the hours of prayer, and were glad when any put them in mind of it, and called upon them to go, saying, *Let us go into the house of the Lord*. And so doubtless are all such at this day. All that truly love, and fear, and honour God, are as glad to go into his house now, as they were then.

It is true, we have no such outward signs of his special presence in our churches, as they had of old in the tabernacle and temple: but howsoever, we cannot doubt

but that he is as specially present with us in such places, as he was with them. For we have his own word for it; saying, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. Whereby we are fully assured, that he doth not now presentiate himself only in one place, as he did under the law, but that wheresoever his faithful people meet together in his name, to serve and worship him, he is there with them, to assist them in what they do, and to bless and sanctify it to them. And therefore every such place dedicated to his service, may as properly be called the house of the Lord, as the temple was. And every pious and devout soul delights as much in going thither, as David did; and can as truly say, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.*

This therefore is that which I shall now demonstrate to you; and for that purpose shall consider, first, the persons who are always glad to go into the house of the Lord; and then, the reasons why they are so.

First, As to the persons; we must not think that all sorts of people delight in going to church, the house of God. For we see the contrary by daily experience: even that many, yea, most of these too who profess the faith of Christ, choose rather to go any where else than thither. Some had rather go to an ale-house, or tavern, or play-house, where they may please their flesh or their fancy. Others are for a shop, a warehouse, or the exchange, where they may buy, or sell, and get gain: like those in the prophet, who said, *When will the new moon be gone, that we may sell corn? and the sabbath, that we may set forth wheat, making the ephah small, and the shekel great, falsifying the balances by deceit?* Amos viii. 5. that is, in plain terms, they had rather be cheating their neighbours, than serving God. Nay, there are many, too many, who choose to sit still at home, and do nothing, rather than go to church and do the work that is there required of them. Such as these are

not glad, but sorry and troubled, when any say unto them, *Let us go into the house of the Lord*; and will look upon them as their enemies, for offering to make such an impertinent and troublesome motion to them.

And it is no wonder. For such people know not what to do at church, nor can take any pleasure in what is there done: they care not for praying or praising God; neither doth *the word preached any way profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that hear it*, Heb. iv. 2. The church is no more to them than an ordinary house; and the whole service that is there performed seems to them an insipid business, which they can no way relish or delight in. And the reason is, because their minds being taken up with the affairs of this life, they are altogether incapable of all things belonging to their everlasting peace; for, as the apostle observes, *the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned*, 1 Cor. ii. 14. Hence it is, that such men, when they are at church, they are restless and uneasy all the while, and long to be out again, that they may follow the business, or enjoy the pleasures their hearts are set on: as for what is done there, they know not what to make of it; and therefore it is no wonder that they care not how seldom they come thither; and if they ever do, it is not a pleasure, but a grief and a trouble to them; which notwithstanding they are forced sometimes to bear with, to keep up their credit and reputation in the world; lest their neighbours should think them to be what they are, mere natural and carnal men, that have no sense at all of religion, but live as without God in the world.

But although these be not, there are other persons that are glad, as David was, to *go into the house of the Lord*. But they are such as David was, of whom it is said, that *he was a man after God's own heart*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. that is, he was a truly good and virtuous man,

one that loved God with all his heart, and lived constantly in his true faith and fear, making it his chief care and business to obey, and serve, and please, and honour him. His heart was wholly inclined to God, and set to obey his commandments, and to glorify his holy name, and so was such a one as God would have him to be, a man after his own heart: who therefore took great delight in every thing that tended to the glory of God: particularly, what vast preparations did he make for the building and adorning the house of God, where he might be served and worshipped? and all because he had set his affection upon it, as he himself said, 1 Chron. xxix. 3. What a mighty love and zeal had he for it? *Lord*, said he, *I have loved the habitation of thy house, and the place where thy honour dwelleth*, Psal. xxvi. 8. *The zeal of thine house hath eaten me up*, Psal. lxi. 9. How earnestly did he desire to go thither? Psal. xlii. 1, 2. lxxxiv. 1, 2. How was he grieved when any thing hindered him from going to the house of God? envying the very *sparrows* and *swallows* that could get thither, when he could not, Psal. lxxxiv. 3. How much did he prefer the time he spent there, before all the rest of his life? and the lowest place in the house of God, before the highest in all the earth besides? *A day in thy courts*, saith he, *is better than a thousand*. *I had rather be a door-keeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness*, ver. 10. And therefore he might well say, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord*.

And so may all good men as well as he; for they are all of the same temper, all acted by the same spirit, as he was. And therefore cannot but delight as much in going to the house of God as he did; and that upon several accounts. First, because of the great comfort they find in doing their duty to God, in worshipping and serving him that made them, and so answering his end in the making of them: for being conscious to

themselves of the duty they owe to God, they can never be at rest in their own minds, without paying it, as far as they can, to him. But when they are doing that, their consciences are quiet, and their minds satisfied, and pleased with the thoughts of their doing what God would have them, and that he is therefore well pleased with them. And whatsoever some may think, this is certainly the greatest comfort that any man can have on this side heaven ; in comparison of which, all the seeming pleasures of this world are nothing but fancy and delusion. *Our rejoicing*, saith the apostle, *is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world*, 2 Cor. i. 12. This is the rejoicing of every good man, when he goes into the house of God ; that his conscience bears witness with him, that he is going about the works of God, the works that he was made for, even to serve and glorify his Maker : hence it is, that they whom God hath sometimes stirred up to go to church, if they afterwards leave it off again, or neglect it upon any slight occasion, their consciences usually fly in their faces, and torment them for it : whereas they who, like Anna the prophetess, never depart from the house of God, but serve him there with fastings and prayer day and night, Luke ii. 37 that is, never, or very rarely, omit either morning or evening sacrifice, their consciences have nothing to say against them for that, but bear witness for them that they do their duty, and please God, and so always live under his favour and protection ; and how great a pleasure that is, none can tell but they who feel it : but they find and feel it to be the greatest pleasure of their lives, the only true joy and comfort of their hearts, and therefore must needs rejoice and be glad at all opportunities they can get of going into the house of the Lord.

And so they are too, because of the good company they meet with there : for there they do not only meet with their fellow-christians, ready to join with them

in the work they go about, but there they meet also with the best friend they have in the world, with Almighty God himself; not as he is their Creator only, but as he is their Saviour also and Redeemer. For as such, he said, *Where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. But whensoever we go to perform our devotions in the house of God, we always do it in his name. And therefore whatsoever company we may chance to meet with there, we are sure of his. He is certainly among them, in the midst of them; for we have his own word for it, which is infinitely more than as if we saw him there with our eyes, or heard him speaking to us, as Moses sometimes did in the tabernacle; for our eyes and our ears might deceive us, but God cannot; *he cannot lie*, Tit. i. 2. And therefore he having said that he is in the midst of us, when we meet together in his name, he cannot but be there. And we may and ought to be as confident of it, as we are or can be of any thing in the world besides; so as never to doubt, but that as it is his house where we meet, so we always meet with him there.

But may we meet with our Lord and Saviour Christ, whensoever we go into the house of God? Is he always there in the midst of us? Who then would not go thither as oft as he can? Men generally delight in nothing so much as in the company of one they love. But all good men, all true Christians, love Christ Jesus above all the things and persons upon earth. And therefore cannot but long to be where he is, and enjoy his company, *whom having not seen, they love; in whom though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. though they see him not with their bodily eyes, yet by faith, which is the *evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1 they are fully assured that he is there, and therefore cannot but delight and rejoice in being there, more than in any other place or company upon earth

besides. And they that do not, have too much cause to suspect that they have not that love and value for their Saviour which a Christian ought to have, and without which no man can truly be called a Christian : if they had, they could never think much of spending an hour or two in a day in his presence, but would look upon the time they are with him, as the best spent of any part of the day ; would joyfully embrace all opportunities of meeting with him, and would be glad when any put them in mind of it, saying, *Let us go into the house of the Lord.*

Especially considering in the next place, that he is in the midst of them, not only as a spectator, auditor, and observer of what they do, and speak, and think together ; but he is there as their Saviour and Redeemer, to assist them in what they do ; to sanctify it to them, and to bestow his manifold favours and blessings upon them, according to their several necessities and occasions. Hear what he himself saith, *In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee, and I will bless thee*, Exod. xx. 24. But wheresoever we meet together in his name, there his name is recorded or remembered ; and therefore he doth not only come thither, but he comes on purpose to bless us. But what blessings doth he bestow on those who meet together in his name ? In general, all sorts of blessings which they are capable of and want : they were all purchased by him, with the price of his blood ; and therefore are wholly at his disposal. And he usually distributes them in his own house, to those who meet there in his name, and so come thither for them ; for when they are there, he, according to his word, comes to them and blesseth them ; he blesseth them with spiritual blessings in heavenly places ; he gives them a true sight of their sins, with an hearty sorrow and repentance for them ; he fills their souls with a sense of God's mercy in the pardon and forgiveness of them ; he opens their eyes, and turns them from darkness to light, and from the power of

satan unto God ; he enlightens their minds, that they may see the wonderful things which are written in the Law and Gospel ; he directs them how to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and to make their calling and election sure ; he grants whatsoever they ask in his name, so far as he sees it to be good for them ; he perfumes their hymns and praises with the incense of his own merits, that God may smell a sweet savour from them : he strengtheneth and refresheth their souls with his own body and blood, *that they may run with patience the race that is set before them* ; he poureth down such a measure of his grace and Spirit upon them, whereby they are enabled to walk in holiness and righteousness before him all their days, and so makes them *meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*.

These are some of those many and great blessings which God our Saviour usually distributes in his own house, while his people are there praying, and praising God ; hearing his word, and receiving the sacrament of his last supper, which are therefore called the means of grace, because they are the ordinary means that Christ hath appointed, wherein to give us his grace and blessing, which all wise and good men desire above all things else, and therefore cannot but join with David in saying, *I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord*.

But hath he no temporal blessings to bestow as well as spiritual ? Yes surely, they also are all at his disposal, and he gives them to his servants, so far as they are blessings ; that is, so far as they are good and necessary for them ; for otherwise they are not blessings, but curses. But he gives them ordinarily with the other, or rather upon their seeking the other before them, and coming unto him for them, according to his word and promise, saying, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, and all these things, that is, all things that are needful for you, shall be added to you,*

Matt. xvi. 33. Whereby his faithful servants have as great a security as can be given them, that they shall never want any thing that is good for them; for they have the infallible word of God himself for it, from whom *comes every good and perfect gift, and with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, James i. 17. And therefore it is impossible that they who seek and serve him before all things, should want any thing that is really good for them, so far as it is so: as impossible as it is for God to lie.

So that all who sincerely devote themselves to his service, need never fear losing any thing by leaving their shops or houses, for a while, to go to church, the house of God. But they should rather be confident, and rest fully satisfied in their minds, that as they go thither to wait upon him, and to do the work that he hath set them; so he, according to his word, will come unto them, and will bless them. He will bless them in their going out, and in their coming in: he will bless them in their basket and in their store: he will bless them in their callings, that they may be sure to get what is needful for them; and he will bless what they have so gotten, both to themselves and families. This they may truly promise themselves, for God himself hath promised it. And therefore they may well rejoice and be glad at all opportunities they can get of going into the house of the Lord.

This will appear further, if we consider also the great pleasure that good men take in what is done while they are in the house of God; howsoever irksome and tedious it may seem to other people; they who truly love and fear God above all things, find more true joy and comfort in his house, than they can do any where else; they are there in their proper elements, about the business they are most inclined to, and therefore must needs be most delighted in, as being suitable to their renewed nature, and agreeable to their spiritual temper and disposition. So that the whole work of the

place in itself affords them great joy and pleasure, which is very much augmented also by the Holy Spirit of God co-operating with them in it; whereby the hearts of those who are rightly disposed for it, are usually filled with all the joy and comfort which as yet they are capable of; according to the promise that God himself hath made to that purpose, where, speaking of those who faithfully serve him, and love his name, he saith, *Them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer*, Isa. lvi. 7 *In my house of prayer*; that is, the place where he usually cheereth and refresheth his people's spirits, more than in any other place upon earth: as I do not doubt but many here present have often found by their own experience, who coming sometimes dull, and heavy, and disconsolate, into the house of God, have there had such discoveries of his greatness and glory, and such intimations of his love and mercy to them, whereby their hearts have been raised up to the highest pitch of joy and cheerfulness, such as none could give them, but he that promised to make them joyful in his house of prayer; and who never fails to perform his promise to them who come thither duly prepared, and keep their minds intent upon him, and upon the duties which are there performed to him, according to the orders and directions of our church.

I say, according to the orders and directions of our church; for I speak not of what is done in those private assemblies, where the people have nothing to do but to hearken to what is done by another; and besides a sermon, have nothing but an extempore prayer, which they know not what it will be until they hear it, and so cannot heartily join in it: but I speak only of the offices and duties which are constantly performed in the house of God, according to the appointment of our church. All which, by God's blessing upon them, and by his grace working together with them, both jointly and severally conduce very much towards the making his

people joyful, and therefore glad to go into the house of the Lord.

Which that I may demonstrate to you, I shall instance more particularly in some of them, and shew how they do not only edify, but recreate and cheer the spirits of all that are truly pious and devout, all the while that they are duly exercised in them: for which purpose I may first observe, that they having at their first entrance into his house confessed their sins to God, and being thereby possessed with a deep sense of the insupportable and eternal torments which they have deserved by them, the minister, in the name of God, and by his authority, solemnly declares, *that he pardoneth and absolveth all them that truly repent, and unfeignedly believe his holy Gospel.* Which to them who are sensible of, and truly penitent for, their sins, as all good people are, is certainly the greatest comfort in the world: in that they are hereby assured, that notwithstanding their manifold provocations of him, Almighty God, upon their repentance and faith in Christ, is now reconciled to them, and receives them into his grace and favour, as much as if they had never offended him. They who are not comforted and rejoiced at this, have too much cause to suspect that they do not feel the weight of their sins, nor regard the love of God; for if they did, they would receive his absolution with the highest expressions of joy and thankfulness; and would not only be glad to go into the house of the Lord, but would be sure always to go soon enough to receive it.

His faithful people now looking upon themselves as absolved from their sins, and restored to the favour of God, according to the promise he hath made in Jesus Christ our Lord, they immediately address themselves to him, as their gracious and most merciful Father, saying, *Our Father, which art in heaven.* And so they go on in the several parts of the service to present their petitions to him, coming boldly, as the apostle speaks, *to the throne of grace, that they may obtain mercy, and find grace*

to help in time of need, Heb. iv. 16. not doubting but that he being now reconciled to them through Christ, will grant them whatsoever they ask in his name, according to his own word, saying, *Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you*, John xvi. 23. In confidence of which promise they accordingly ask whatsoever they stand in need of, either as to this world or the next; still keeping their eye and their faith fixed upon the almighty Creator of the world, as their most loving Father; and upon his Son, as their most powerful Advocate with him, continually making intercession for them, that their services may be accepted, and their petitions granted by him, so far as he in his infinite wisdom knows them to be expedient for them. Thus, all the while they are upon their knees, they are conversing with Almighty God, and exercising their faith in Christ, and so have *fellowship both with the Father and the Son*, 1 John 3. Now what a mighty pleasure and comfort this is to all the true saints and servants of God, I need not tell them: though nobody else doth, they know it, they feel it to be the greatest, the only true joy and comfort of their hearts. For hereby they enjoy communion with God, the chiefest, the only good, and rest fully satisfied in their minds, that they shall want nothing that is good for them, nothing that can either do them or make them good; seeing they have him who is all good in himself, and his word for whatsoever they ask that is so to them: whereby they, according to their capacities in this mortal state, in some measure enjoy all the good things that God hath made, and him too that made them. Which is so great an happiness, that they who have once tasted of it, cannot but always desire it, and therefore must needs be glad to go into the house of the Lord to partake of it.

Besides that, they never go into the house of the Lord, but they have some part of his own word solemnly read, if not expounded also to them, and so they always

there hear their heavenly Father speaking and making known himself and his holy will unto them, what he would have them believe and do, that they may continue in his love and favour, which all his dutiful and obedient children prize and desire above all things in this world. *The judgments of the Lord, saith David, are true and righteous altogether : more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold ; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb, Psal. xix. 9, 10. The law of thy mouth is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver, Psal. cxix. 72. How sweet are thy words unto my lips ! sweeter than honey to my mouth, ver 103.*

And verily it is no wonder that the children of God thus highly value and delight in his holy word ; for as it is by his word that they are begotten or born again of God, and so made his children at first, Jam. i. 18. so the same word is afterwards the proper nourishment of their souls, whereby their new and spiritual life is sustained and increased in them, so as to *grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, 2 Pet. iii. 18.* And therefore, as *new-born babes, they cannot but desire the sincere milk of the word, that they may grow thereby, 1 Pet. ii. 2.* But this is communicated to them by their heavenly Father most effectually in his own house ; for although they may read the word of God over and over again at home, or in any other place, yet they find by experience that it never comes with so much power and efficacy upon them, as when it is administered to them in his own house, in his name, by an officer of his own appointment, while his people are met together to serve and worship him, and so have his Holy Spirit assisting and co-operating with his word, that it may work effectually in them that believe, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Who therefore finding the word of God to be quite another thing when publicly read or explained in God's house, than it is at their own, they cannot but be exceeding glad of all opportunities of going thither to hear it.

Especially seeing when they come there they do not only pray and hear God's holy word, but they join together also in praising and magnifying his holy name; not only a little by the by, as occasion serves in the prayers and lessons, but in a set and solemn manner: so that this makes a great, if not the greatest part, of our daily service; which we have no sooner began, but we presently call upon one another, saying, in the words of the Holy Ghost, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation: let us come into his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.* And then we accordingly go on to praise him with psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs: we commonly repeat several psalms together, and, after every one of them, we constantly give glory to God, saying, *Glory be to the Father, &c.* After the first lesson, we repeat the *Te Deum*, *We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord; or else the Benedicite, O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him, and magnify him for ever.* After the second lesson we say the *Benedictus*, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people; or else the hundredth psalm, called the Jubilate, O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands; serve the Lord with gladness, and come before his presence with a song.* And so in the afternoon we sing the *Magnificat*, or the ninety-eighth psalm, after the first lesson; and after the second, the *Nunc dimittis*, or the sixty-seventh psalm: besides all which, we constantly repeat the *Creed*, or confession of our faith, wherein we acknowledge the glory of the eternal Trinity, and recount the wonderful things which the Son of God hath done for us; how "he was conceived "by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary; suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and "buried; descended into hell, rose again the third day, "ascended up into heaven, and there sitteth at the right "hand of God, in the glory of the Father." By all

which we set forth the praises of the most high God, in the best manner we can do it upon earth.

Thus whensoever we come into the house of the Lord, we join together in praising him, our almighty Creator, and most merciful Redeemer, and so do the great work for which he created and redeemed us ; which therefore must needs be very pleasant and delightful to those who believe themselves to be not only created, but likewise redeemed by him for that end and purpose. As David found by experience, when he said, *My soul shall be satisfied even as it were with marrow and fatness, when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips*, Psal. lxxiii. 6. Where we may likewise observe, that joyfulness doth so necessarily accompany our praising God, that we can never do it aright without it ; for we must always praise him with joyful lips, *we must sing merrily to God our strength, and make a cheerful noise to the God of Jacob*, Psal. lxxxii. 1. *And rejoice in giving praise for the operations of his hands*, Psal. xcii. 4. Which we cannot choose but do, if we duly consider those infinite perfections we acknowledge in him, and the glorious works we praise him for ; for the very agnizing and celebrating of them, fills our souls with unspeakable joy and pleasure, the highest that we are capable of. This is that which makes heaven itself to be so pleasant a place to those who dwell there, because they are always praising God. There *the cherubin and seraphin continually do cry, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of sabaoth ; heaven and earth are full of the majesty of thy glory*. There *the glorious company of the apostles praise him*. There *the goodly fellowship of the prophets praise him*. There *the noble army of martyrs praise him*. There all the spirits of just men made perfect praise him continually. And if we shall ever be so happy as to be admitted into their blessed society, we shall join with them in praising him that brought us thither ; this will be our work, and this will be our pleasure for evermore : and as ever we desire to do it there, we must

delight in doing it here first ; otherwise our hearts will not be set right for it, and so we *shall not be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light* : but that is the thing which all that are truly wise and pious, most earnestly desire above all things else, and therefore cannot but always rejoice and be glad to go into the house of God, that they may there praise him, and so begin that work in time, which they hope to continue to all eternity.

But that which above all makes the saints and servants of the most high God so joyful in his house of prayer, and therefore so glad to go thither, is the sacrament of the Lord's supper, usually performed there, ordained by our Lord, the almighty God, our Saviour himself, on purpose to put us in mind of him, and so to confirm our faith in him, to inflame our love to him, to excite our desires and longing after him, to fill our hearts with joy and thankfulness for him, that our souls may be strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are with bread and wine. Here we receive the pardon of all our sins, sealed to us in the blood of the Son of God. Here we eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ by faith, so as that he dwelleth in us, and we in him ; he is one with us, and we with him.

Hereby we are assured of God's love and favour to us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of his Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people, and also are heirs, through hope, of his everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of his dear Son. Where shall we find matter of so great joy and comfort on this side heaven ? No where certainly but in God's own house, where he is pleased to give it us at his holy table, when the sacrament of his most blessed body and blood is there administered, as it is every Lord's day in this, and some other, and ought to be so in all the houses of God in the land : that his people may never want that

spiritual food which he hath provided for them, wherewith to nourish and preserve both their souls and bodies to everlasting life, which his dutiful and obedient children, always hungering and thirsting after, cannot but be overjoyed at all occasions of having it administered unto them. And therefore as they always rejoice and are glad when any say unto them, *Let us go into the house of the Lord*, so especially when they say, Let us go unto the table of the Lord; and are always ready to say with David, Psal. lxxv. 4.

These things I thought good to put you in mind of at this time, not only to shew what cause we have to thank God that his house is refitted, and that we are got again into it; but likewise that you may see that it is your interest, as well as duty, to frequent it as much as possibly you can. I am very sensible, that all that I have now said, and all that can be said upon this subject, will have but little effect upon the greatest part of them which hear it: for we live in an age that is only for hearing, not for doing any thing they hear; much less, that which ye have now heard; which, as I observed before, none can receive in the love of it, but only such as are renewed in the spirit of their minds, and so are wholly devoted to the service of God. All others will think what you have now heard to be a mere paradox. They can never get it into their heads that there is any profit or pleasure to be had at church, because they could never find it there: but the reason is, not because it is not to be had, but because their minds being set upon other things, they are not qualified or disposed for those pure and spiritual joys which God vouchsafeth to his people in his own house, and to none but them. All others are altogether unacquainted with them; which being the many, or rather the most, hence it comes to pass, that daily prayers are so much slighted and neglected among us, far more, to our shame be it spoken, than among any other sort of people in the world. The papists will rise up in judgment with this

generation, for they every day observe their canonical hours for praying, at least, for that which they believe to be so. The Jews will rise up in judgment with this generation, for they never omitted to offer their daily sacrifices, so long as they had an house of God wherein to offer them. The Turks shall rise up in judgment with this generation ; for when their priests call the people to prayer, as they do several times every day, they immediately run to their mosques or temples ; and if any offer to stay at home, he is shunned by all, as a wicked, atheistical wretch. The Heathens will rise up in judgment with this generation, for if they had such opportunities as we have, of praying and praising their almighty Creator every day, I doubt not but they would do it far more constantly, than it is done by most of us. What then can we expect but that some severe judgment or other will, ere long, be inflicted on us ? when people generally live as without God in the world, notwithstanding the clear discoveries that he hath made of himself unto them, and notwithstanding the means of grace which are so constantly administered to them, but they will not use them.

But let others continue, if they please, in this wicked course, and take what follows. You have now heard what a joyful and pleasant thing it is to go into the house of God, to serve and worship him there ; be now advised to do it, and to do it as oft as possibly you can. I dare assure you ye will then experience the truth of all that I have now said of it, and far more than I am able to express. But for that purpose, whensoever ye go into the house of the Lord, you must lay aside all other business, and apply yourselves wholly to the duties of that holy place ; ye must keep your minds intent all the while upon him before whom ye are, and upon the work which he hath there set you. You must confess your sins heartily, you must receive his absolution faithfully, you must hear his word attentively, you must pray sincerely, you must praise him lustily, and with a

good courage ; and when ye receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, ye must do it with that true repentance, that strong faith, that heavenly joy and thankfulness that is due to so great a mystery. Thus exercising your souls continually in these holy and spiritual duties, that are performed in God's lower houses upon earth, ye will be every day more and more prepared and fitted to live with him in heaven, there to enjoy and praise him for ever.

SERMON LIX.

THE DUTY OF PUBLIC THANKSGIVING.

PSAL. xcv. 1, 2.

O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms.

AS David was both a king and a prophet, he had, in both respects, the highest encomium given him by the Holy Ghost himself, that ever man had. As a king, he is said to be a *man after God's own heart*, 1 Sam. xiii. 14. and as a prophet, he is called the *sweet psalmist, or singer of Israel*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 1 he having, it seems, composed such divine songs to the praise and honour of God, and played and sung them after so divine a manner, that God himself was pleased to declare himself to be delighted with them, as we use to be with music that sounds sweet or melodious in our ears. Which should be a great encouragement to us to imitate him as near as we can in praising God, that we also may find grace and favour in the sight of God, as he did. It is true, we can never expect to reach his pitch, either with our hearts or voices ; yet, nevertheless, if we do but set ourselves in good earnest about it, and do it as well as we can, we cannot doubt but what we do in it will be also acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

This therefore is the great duty which I intend, by

God's assistance, to discourse of from these words, wherewith this sweet singer of Israel invites and calls upon others, upon all others, to join with him in singing forth the praises of God. He would not have them do it only by themselves, but with him, that he might always make one among them. He doth not say, *O go and sing ye*, but, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation*. Neither would he have them do it with him only, in his or any of their private houses, but in God's own house, in his special presence, saying, *Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms*. And therefore our church hath wisely made choice of this psalm, wherewith to begin her public praises of God every morning in the year. By this we first call upon and excite one another to join together in singing forth the praises of God, this day or at this time, and then go on singing, or saying the rest of the psalms appointed for the day, together with the other hymns and the creed, only interposing some part of God's holy word, wherein he having manifested himself and his glory to us, the reading and hearing of that too, tends towards the setting forth his honour and praise: so that from the beginning of this psalm, to the end of the apostles' creed, our public service is a continual praising God, as it ought to be; and therefore is very properly ushered in with these words, *O come, let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation: let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms*.

Now for our better understanding of these words, and the duty contained in them, I shall shew,

I. What it is properly to praise God.

II. That this is a duty to be performed in all our religious assemblies.

III. How it ought to be performed, so as that it might be acceptable to Almighty God.

The first may seem a very needless question ; most people thinking that they know well enough already what it is to praise God. And I heartily wish that all would do as much as they know of it. But there may be more in it than men are commonly aware of. Or howsoever, it will be worth the while to explain it, that we may have clear as well as right notions of it : for which purpose therefore, our surest way will be to take our measures of it, from those who were immediately directed and assisted in it by the Holy Ghost himself, and those ways and methods of praising God are recorded in his holy word, on purpose that we might better understand the nature of the duty, and how to do it. Of which number David must needs be acknowledged to be one : for as *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, his psalms are particularly said to be so. For the apostle, quoting part of this very psalm, saith, *Wherefore as the Holy Ghost saith, To-day if ye will hear his voice, &c.* Heb. iii. 7 the same may be said of all the rest : though David wrote and spoke them, he did it by the Holy Ghost, or rather the Holy Ghost did it by him, as he himself saith, *The Spirit of the Lord spake by me, and his word was in my tongue*, 2 Sam. xxiii. 2. Whereby we are fully assured, that David's way of praising God was prescribed and dictated to him by God himself. And therefore, although I shall take in what I find in other places of Scripture concerning this subject, yet I shall in a more especial manner consult the book of psalms, which treats more of praising God, than all the other holy Scriptures put together, and seems to be written and preserved for this very purpose, that we may be fully instructed about this great duty.

Now the first thing to be here observed concerning praising God is, that it is usually expressed by such words as signify our owning, or acknowledging, and declaring him to be what he is, and to do what is done in the world. Sometimes it is called תהלה, from whence

the whole book is called תהלים, *psalms*, from a root, which signifies to manifest a thing so that it may appear and shine in the world ; and accordingly to praise God, is properly to declare and set forth his glory, that others may see and admire it. But the most usual word for it is תודה, which in my text is rendered *thanksgiving*, but in most places it is translated *praise* : and it is no great matter by which of these words it is rendered, *praise* and *thanksgiving* being in effect one and the same thing. But the Hebrew word comes from a root, which signifies to confess or acknowledge, as it is sometimes translated, and may be so wheresoever it is used with respect to God : as where it is said, *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness* ; in the original it is, ירו ליהוה חסדו, *O that men would confess unto the Lord his goodness*, Psal. cvii. 8, 15, 21, 31. And whereas it is often said, *O praise or give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good*, Psal. cxviii. 136, &c. the literal sense is, *O confess unto the Lord that he is good, that his mercy endureth for ever*. And so David himself explains it, adding immediately after, *Let Israel now confess, or say, that his mercy endureth for ever. Let the house of Aaron now say, that his mercy endureth for ever*, Psal. cxviii. 2, 3, 4. And so it is explained too in the beginning of the *Te Deum*, *We praise thee, O God, we acknowledge thee to be the Lord*. This is properly to praise God, when we acknowledge and confess that he is the Lord, Jehovah ; being itself the centre of all perfections ; that he made, preserves, and governs the whole world, and all things in it ; that he is infinitely good, and true, and merciful to mankind in general, and to us in particular. Thus it is that David and all saints have been always used to praise him.

First, by acknowledging and setting forth his name, his glory, his wisdom, his power, his goodness, his majesty, his immensity, his eternity, and all his divine perfections. Thus David begins to praise him in this psalm,

saying, *Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves joyful unto him with psalms: for the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods*, Psal. xcv. 3. And so elsewhere, *Bring unto the Lord, O ye mighty, bring young rams unto the Lord: ascribe unto the Lord worship and strength: give unto the Lord the honour due unto his name*, Psal. xxix. 1, 2. *Praise the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious, thou art clothed with majesty and honour: thou deckest thyself with light as with a garment, and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain*, Psal. civ. 1, 2. *I will magnify thee, O God my King, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I give thanks to thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever. Great is the Lord, and marvellous, worthy to be praised; there is no end of his greatness*, Psal. cxlv. 1, 2. *Sing unto the Lord, and praise his name; be telling of his salvation from day to day. Declare his honour to the heathen, and his wonders unto all people. Glory and worship are before him, power and honour are in his sanctuary. Ascribe unto the Lord, O ye kindreds of the people, ascribe unto the Lord worship and power*, Psal. xcvi. 2, 3, 4, 6, 7. *O sing unto God, and give praises unto his name; magnify him that rideth upon the heavens: praise him in his name Jehovah, and rejoice before him*, Psal. lxviii. 4.

Thus David praiseth him all along in the psalms; and thus the angels in heaven praise him, saying, *Amen, blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God for ever and ever*, Rev. vii. 12.

And as we are thus to praise God by owning and celebrating his divine nature and glory, so also by acknowledging and extolling the wonderful works that he hath done in the world; as David doth in this psalm, by saying, *In his hand are all the corners of the earth, and the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his,*

and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry land. O come, let us worship and fall down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker, Psal. xcv. 4, 5, 6. And so elsewhere, I will give thanks unto thee, O Lord, with all my heart, I will speak of all thy marvellous works, Psal. ix. 1. O be joyful in God all ye lands, sing praises unto the honour of his name, make his praise to be glorious. Say unto God, O how wonderful art thou in thy works, Psal. lxxvi. 1, 2. O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his name; tell the people what things he hath done. O let your songs be of him, and praise him, and let your talking be of all his wondrous works. Remember the marvellous works that he hath done, his wonders, and the judgments of his mouth, Psal. cv. 1, 2, 5. One generation shall praise thy works unto another, and declare thy power. As for me, I will be talking of thy worship, thy glory, thy praise, and wondrous works. So that men shall speak of the might of thy marvellous acts, and I will also tell of thy greatness, Psal. cxlv. 4, 5, 6. Blessed be the Lord God, even the God of Israel, which only doth wondrous things. And blessed be the name of his Majesty, and all the earth shall be filled with his Majesty, Psal. lxxii. 18, 19. And as David thus praised God by speaking of his works in general, so also by recounting particularly what wonders he hath done and still doth in the creation and government of the world. And so doth the choir of heaven in that seraphic anthem, Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power; for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created, Rev. iv. 11.

If we look over the Psalms, we shall find many such instances of David's thus praising God, by reckoning up the wonderful works which he hath done, and particularly those which he hath done for mankind; *O come hither, saith he, and behold the works of God, how wonderful he is in his doing towards the children of*

men, Psal. lxvi. 4. And, *O that men would praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doth for the children of men*, Psal. cvii. 8, &c. above all, he delighteth in the recognition of God's mercy and truth unto his people. In one whole psalm, he doth nothing but declare the great things which God did for Israel, and acknowledge his mercy in them, by repeating after every one of them severally, *for his mercy endureth for ever*, Psal. cxxxvi. In another psalm he speaks of nothing but God's mercy, or his loving-kindness and truth, Psal. cxvii. And elsewhere saith, *My song shall be always of the loving-kindness of the Lord; with my mouth will I ever be shewing thy truth, from one generation to another: for I have said, Mercy shall be set up for ever; thy truth wilt thou establish in the heavens*, Psal. lxxxix. 1, 2. And accordingly we find him often celebrating these two divine perfections together, Psal. lvii. 11 Psal. c. 4. Psal. xxv. 9. Psal. xxvi. 3. Psal. xl. 14. Psal. lxxxv. 10. Psal. lxxxvi. 15. Psal. lxxxix. 25, 48. Psal. cxv. 1 Psal. xcii. 2. Where, by God's mercy we are to understand pardon and grace, and all things necessary to our salvation that he hath promised; and by truth, his faithful performance of all such promises in Jesus Christ: *for as the law was given by Moses, grace, or mercy, and truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. And therefore in all places where David speaks of God's mercy and truth, he thereby celebrates the great work of our salvation by Christ. Hence it is, that he having said, *He hath remembered his mercy and truth towards the house of Israel*, he immediately adds, *and all the ends of the world have seen the salvation of our God*, Psal. xcvi. 4. And the blessed Virgin, when her soul magnified the Lord for the salvation of mankind by him, who was now to be born of her, she saith, *He remembering his mercy hath holpen his servant Israel, as he promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed for ever*; where she plainly ascribes our salvation to

God's mercy in promising it, and to his truth in performing the said promise. And so doth Zacharias in his divine hymn, saying, *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people; and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us in the house of his servant David, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets—to perform the mercy promised to our forefathers, and to remember his holy covenant,* Luke i. 68, 69, 70, 72. And so the saints in heaven praise God, by attributing their salvation wholly unto him, saying, *Salvation to our God which sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb,* Rev. vii. 10. And again, *Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God,* Rev. xix. 1.

And as we ought thus to praise God for all his wonderful works, especially for his redemption of mankind by Jesus Christ in general; so we ought to do it for every particular instance of his mercy and truth that he is pleased to shew us in him: for our health, and strength, and life, and liberty; for our meat, and drink, and clothing; for our safety, and preservation from danger; for our deliverance from our enemies; for the love of our friends; for our parts, and gifts, and estates, and all the accommodations of this life; for the means of grace, and the hope of glory. Thus Moses, Exod. xv. 1. and Israel, Numb. xxi. 17. and Deborah, Judges v. 1. and Hannah, 1 Sam. ii. 1. and Jehosaphat, 2 Chron. xx. 21. praised God upon particular occasions, and David upon all. How doth he stir up himself to bless God for all the benefits he had received from him? *Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, making thee young and lusty as an eagle,* Psal. ciii. 1—5. Yea, whatsoever happens to

us, though it be never so contrary to our present expectations and desires, yet as it comes from God, we ought to praise him for it, as Job did, for his taking all he had from him, as well as for his bestowing it upon him, *The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord*, Job i. 21

I shall observe only one thing more concerning the nature of this duty, as it was practised by the saints of old; which is, that none of them thought they could ever praise God enough themselves, and therefore called upon others to do it, as David doth upon the kingdoms of the earth, Psal. lxxviii. 32. upon all people, Psal. xlvii. 1 lxxvii. 3, 5. upon all his saints, Psal. xxii. 23. xxx. 4. upon all angels, Psal. ciii. 20, 21 upon all his works, ver. 22. upon the sun, the moon, and stars; upon the heavens, and the waters that are above the heavens; upon all things that are upon the earth; upon dragons and all deeps; upon fire and hail, snow and vapours, wind and storms; upon mountains, and all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars, beasts and cattle, worms, and feathered fowls; upon kings of the earth, and all people, princes, and all judges of the world, young men and maids, old men and children, he calls upon them all to praise the Lord, saying, *Praise ye the name of the Lord; for his name only is excellent, and his praise above heaven and earth*, Psal. cxlviii. And so do the three children in the *Benedicite*, or hymn appointed to be sometimes sung instead of the *Te Deum*, beginning, *O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord, praise him, and magnify him for ever* And accordingly we read in the Revelations of St. John, *Every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever*, Rev. v. 13. As David saith, *The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handy work*, Psal. xix. 1.

So every creature that is, affords abundant matter for praising God, and if it had a tongue should do it; which St. John was so sensible of, that he heard them in a manner doing it. And the true saints of God have always had such a mighty zeal for his honour and glory, and so deep a sense of their own insufficiency to praise him as he deserves, that their most usual way of doing it is by calling upon others, and upon all the creatures in the world, to praise him, crying out indefinitely, הללה, *Praise ye the Lord*. Which occurs so often in the psalms, especially at the beginning of them, that none have thought it to be the title of the psalm, and therefore in some translations it is left out; but it certainly belongs to the body of such psalms to which it is prefixed in the Hebrew, or rather, it is the very soul and life of them, influencing and directing them to the end for which they are designed, even the glory of God; yea, it is a psalm of itself, such a psalm that the choir of heaven sometimes sing it alone, as at other times they begin or end their seraphic anthems with it. *I heard*, saith St. John, *a great voice of much people in heaven, saying, Allelujah, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God. And again they said, Allelujah: and I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of many thunderings, saying, Allelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*, Rev. xix. 1, 3, 6. *And the four and twenty elders and the four beasts fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen, Allelujah*, ver. 4. This is the way that they praise God in the church triumphant in heaven, and which we should therefore imitate in the church militant here on earth, by calling upon one another, and upon all the creatures in the world, saying, *Allelujah, praise ye the Lord*. To which the ancient church kept so close, that they retained the very Hebrew word in their several languages; especially the Arabians; for, in the Arabic translation of the psalms, the Hebrew

word **ללהלל** is usually put at the end of the psalms in Arabic characters ; so that after they had read any psalm, they said or sung *Allelujah*, as we do, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost* ; which is the same thing in other words ; for as all the three persons are **ה** the Lord, so when we say, *Glory be to the Lord*, we do not only ascribe glory to him ourselves, but declare it to be due unto him from all his creatures, and accordingly call upon all to do it ; only with this difference, that we particularly name all the three divine persons to which all glory is equally due, *that all men should honour the Son*, (and the Holy Ghost,) *even as they honour the Father*, John v. 23.

This will give us some light also into that which I promise to shew in the next place, even that praising God is a duty that ought to be performed in all our religious assemblies ; for seeing it consists in recognizing the glory, the power, and the wonderful works of God, and in calling upon others to do it, we ought certainly to take all occasions we can get for it, and never meet together, at least upon a religious account, without doing it as well as we can. And therefore where we read of any great company of the heavenly hosts met together, we shall find them praising God : as at our Saviour's birth ; when one angel had delivered the joyful message to the shepherds, there were suddenly with him a multitude of them, *praising God, and saying, Glory be to God on high, on earth peace, and good will towards men*, Luke ii. 13, 14. And in the Revelations of St. John, we meet with innumerable companies of them met together about it, Rev. v. 10, 11, 13. vii. 9, 11 xix. 1 The same hath been the practice of the saints on earth in all ages : they have been always wont to meet together in God's own house, to praise him there in the public congregations ; *My praise shall be always of thee*, saith David, *in the great congregation*, Psal. xxii. 25. *Thou, O God, art praised in Sion, and to thee shall the vow be performed in*

Jerusalem, Psal. lxxv. 1. *Blessed are they that dwell in thy house ; they will be always praising thee*, Psal. lxxxiv. 4. *O go ye into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise*, Psal. c. 3. civ. 1, 2, 3. cxxxv. 2. It was there, as the prophet Isaiah saith, *that they praised God*, Isaiah lxiv. 11. And David appointed officers on purpose to stand there every morning to thank and praise the Lord, and likewise at even, 1 Chron. xxiii. 30. And in the New Testament we find Christ himself there singing an hymn together with his apostles, when they were met together to eat the passover, Matt. xxvi. 30. Which is supposed to have been הלל תרנל, the great hymn which the Jews used to sing upon such occasions, consisting of the cxliiith psalm, and the five following. And after his ascension it is said, that the apostles *returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God*, Luke xxiv. 52, 53. that is, they went to the temple every day, continually at the hours of prayer, to praise God there : which shews that this is the great end of all religious assemblies ; as our church also informs us in the exhortation at the beginning of her daily service, saying, “ that we “ assemble and meet together before God, to render “ thanks for the great benefits that we have received at “ his hands, and to set forth his most worthy praise : ” and therefore hath accordingly composed her service so, that a great part of it consists of psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, of which the Creed itself, as I observed before, may well be reckoned one, as being a public acknowledgment and declaration of what God is, and of what he hath done for mankind. And therefore may very well be always sung, as the Nicene sometimes is ; yea, the very Collects begin and end with praise, as the Lord's prayer doth.

But that it is necessary to praise God whensoever we meet together to worship him, is so plain and manifest, that I need not insist upon the proving of it ; and there-

fore shall only add concerning it, that although the public prayers and supplications are, as they ought to be, read by the minister alone, the people joining with him only in their hearts or affections, without repeating the words aloud after him, except it be in the Confession and Lord's prayer; yet in praising God, the whole congregation is equally concerned. *Young men and maids, old men and children*, as David speaks, all that are there present, *should, with one heart and one mouth, glorify God*, Rom. xv. 6. As all the children of Israel are said to praise the Lord, 2 Chron. vii. 3. and all the saints and angels are represented as doing it in heaven, Rev. v. 10, 11, 13. vii. 9, 10. xiv. 1, 2, 3. So all the servants of the Lord are required to do it when they come into his house. *Behold now, praise ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord, ye that by right stand in the house of the Lord, even in the courts of the house of our God: lift up your hands in the sanctuary, and praise the Lord*, Psal. cxxxiv. 1, 2, 3.

Now there are two ways whereby the whole congregation may thus join together in praising God, both which are used in our church, either first, by having the psalms and hymns set to such ordinary and plain tunes, that all people may sing them together, as we do the psalms of David in our parish-churches: or else by singing or saying them alternately, as in cathedral and collegiate churches, one side of the choir sings one verse, the other the next; in other places the minister repeats one verse, the people another, and so on, all along to the end of the psalms or hymns, appointed for that occasion; which is the most ancient way that we know of, used by the church of God. It was after some such manner that Moses and Miriam, and all the children of Israel, praised God for their deliverance from the Egyptians, in that divine anthem that Moses composed for that purpose, as may be gathered from Exod. xv. 1, 20, 1. Where Philo the learned Jew observes, that they sung, ἀντιφθόγγοις ἀρμονίαις, with alternate harmonies, an-

swering one another, *de vita Mos.* l. 3. At the building of the second temple, we read that the priests and Levites sung together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord, *Ezra* iii. 11. And in the vision which the prophet Isaiah had of the Seraphim singing in heaven, it is said, *And one cried unto another, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory,* *Isaiah* vi. 3. And when the four beasts in the Revelations had sung the same hymn, the four and twenty elders answered, as it were by course, saying, *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power,* *Rev* iv. 8, 9, 10, 11. To this way of singing St. Paul seems to refer, where he saith to the Ephesians, *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody unto the Lord in your hearts,* *Eph.* v. 19. Where by psalms, I understand those of David's composing: by hymns, such anthems as were made up chiefly of praise and thanksgiving, by whomsoever composed: by spiritual songs, all sorts of songs upon any spiritual subject. These the apostle would have them speak or sing to themselves, or to another by course, as the words *πρὸς ἑαυτοὺς* here, being the same as *Col.* iii. 16. *πρὸς ἀλλήλους*, signify And accordingly we find, from the testimony of Pliny, that the Christians in the first age did, *Carmen Christo quasi Deo dicere secum invicem*, they sang or repeated in their assemblies a verse or hymn to Christ as God, among themselves by course, or one after another. And this, as might be shewn, hath been the practice of the church of Christ all along, and is still continued among us, as being the most easy and proper way for all sorts of people to join together in setting forth the praises of God, and the best means whereby to keep our minds intent upon the great work we are about, and to assist, quicken, and excite one another in the performance of it.

But how it ought to be performed, so as that it may be acceptable to God, is the last thing I promised to

consider. For which we may observe, that this being the greatest work we can ever do, we ought to do it with all our might, and with all the art and skill that we can attain to in it. *Sing unto the Lord*, saith David, *a new song, sing praises unto him with a good courage*; or, as it is in the other translation, *play skilfully with a loud noise*, Psal. xxxiii. 3. But whatsoever strength or skill we use with our voices, we must take special care that our hearts keep tune and time with them; for it is then only that we make melody unto the Lord, Eph. v. 19. And therefore David calls upon his heart or soul to do it. *Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, praise his holy name*, Psal. ciii. 1. And when he found his heart in tune, right set for so great a work, then he set about it, *My heart*, saith he, *is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed; I will sing and give praise*, Psal. lvii. 8. cviii. 1. *I will thank thee, O Lord, with all my heart, and will praise thy name for ever*, Psal. lxxxvi. 12. cxi. 1

And this is a thing that all must observe and do, that ever desire to praise God acceptably. For how much soever any words may set forth his praise, and notwithstanding that the church, by appointing such psalms and hymns to be sung or said every day, hath done, and still doth all she can, as a body, to have him every day praised as he ought to be, and I do not doubt but that God is graciously pleased to accept of it as from the church in general, and to manifest his special favour and kindness unto her for it; yet as for particular persons, whatsoever psalms or hymns, or spiritual songs, they may sing or repeat with their tongues, unless they sing at the same time and make melody to the Lord in their hearts, he never accepts of it from them, any further than as they thereby assist, excite, and stir up others to praise him better, than otherwise perhaps they would do it. For in this, as in all our services, he looks especially into our hearts, whether they go along with their tongues or no. And if they do not, our tongues, how

well soever they may be set and tuned, are but as so many organ-pipes, or other musical instruments, which may help others to praise God, but do it not themselves.

Hence therefore, I beseech and advise you all, whensoever you meet together to praise God, that you would do it heartily. Take heed of that careless and customary way that hath prevailed too much among us, of running over the psalms and hymns only as a task imposed upon you, or as if no more was required of you but only to repeat the words in such a tone or tune, without considering the sense and meaning of them; and so without performing any reasonable service unto God. But strive all ye can to keep your hearts close to the great work you are about, all the while you are about it: consider who it is you speak of, and who it is you speak to; as when ye say, *We praise thee, O God*, you speak to Almighty God himself, the Lord or Governor of the whole world; you acknowledge him to be so with your mouths, do it also in your hearts. When you speak of or unto Christ, as you often do in that and other hymns, consider what you say of him, so as that your hearts may be affected with it, as they ought to be some way or other with every thing you say or sing upon that solemn occasion, according as the nature of the subject requires. As when we say, *Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost*, we speak of him who made us and all the world, and therefore should accordingly fear and dread him: we speak of him who redeemed us and all mankind, and therefore should accordingly believe and trust on him: we speak of him too, who sanctifies us, and all the elect people of God, and therefore should accordingly desire to be made holy by him, and so give God the glory of our creation, redemption, and sanctification, in our hearts as well as with our mouths. Thus our minds, our understandings, our wills and affections, as well as our tongues, ought to be exercised all the while that we are singing

forth the praises of God, according to that of the apostle, *I will pray with the spirit, and I will pray with the understanding also. I will sing with the spirit, and I will sing with the understanding also*, 1 Cor. xiv. 15.

But that passion or affection which ought more especially to be raised in the soul while we are praising God is joy, which is so proper and necessary to it, that to rejoice in the Lord, is often in holy Scripture put for praising him, and ought always to be joined with it; as the Psalmist doth here, *O come. let us sing unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation: let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and shew ourselves glad in him with psalms*. And the blessed Virgin, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my Spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour*. And St. James, *Is any merry, let him sing psalms*, James v. 13. Implying both that the best time to praise God is when we are merry; and the best way to express our mirth is by praising God, as David did, Psal. xcii. 4. Hence it is that the church of God in all ages hath been wont to sing forth the praises of God, and often to use musical instruments in it, not only to help their voices, but also to revive and cheer their spirits, and so to raise them to a due pitch, and put them to a right frame and disposition for so high and heavenly a work as this is: and therefore when David would praise God in the best manner that he could, he calls for instruments of music, *Sing we merrily unto God our strength, make a cheerful noise unto the God of Jacob: take the psalm, bring hither the tabret, the merry harp with the lute: blow up the trumpet in the new moon, even in the time appointed, and upon the feast-day*, Psal. lxxxi. 1, 2, 3. And he would have all others do so too, saying, *Shew yourselves joyful unto the Lord, all ye lands; sing, rejoice, and give thanks. Praise the Lord upon the harp, sing to the harp with a psalm of thanksgiving: with trumpets also and shawms, O shew yourselves joyful before the Lord the King*, Psal. xcvi. 5,

6, 7 So Psal. lxxi. 20. cxliv. 9. cxlix. 1, 2, 3. Yea, in one short psalm, he calls upon all to praise God thirteen times, according to the number of the glorious attributes and divine perfections which God proclaimed to Moses, Exod. xxxiv. and he would have them do it upon all sorts of musical instruments; and then concludes that, and all the Psalms, with singing, *Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord: והלרה, Praise ye the Lord*, Psal. cl.

Thus it was that the saints of old, when inspired and directed by God himself, were wont to praise him. And thus we therefore ought to praise him as well as we can: but being conscious to ourselves, that when we have done our best, we come far short of what we ought to do, we must trust in our blessed Saviour for God's acceptance of it, and then we need not doubt but these our spiritual sacrifices will be acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

I shall observe only one thing more concerning this great duty; which is, that although it ought never to be omitted in our religious assemblies, yet it ought not to be confined to them; for we ought to praise and give thanks to God upon all occasions for every thing, 1 Thess. v. 18. Eph. v. 20. every day, continually. By him therefore, saith the apostle, *let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually*, Heb. xiii. 15. As all the apostles did, Luke xxiv. 53. And David, *I will always give thanks unto the Lord; his praise shall ever be in my mouth*, Psal. xxxiv. 1. *I will magnify thee, O God, my king, and I will praise thy name for ever and ever: every day will I give thanks unto thee, and praise thy name for ever and ever*, Psal. cxlv. 1, 2. *Seven times a day do I praise thee, because of thy righteous judgments*, Psal. cxix. 164. Not but that he did it oftener, but that was the least he ever did; for usually it was his continual employment for a whole day together: *As for my tongue*, saith he, *it shall be talking of thy righteousness and of thy praise all the day*

long, Psal. xxxv. 28. And that too as long as he lived, *While I live will I praise the Lord; yea, as long as I have any being, I will sing praises unto my God*, Psal. cxlvi. 1. so Psal. civ. 33.

And that we and all mankind are bound to do so as well as he, will easily be granted by all who consider, that this is the end of our creation, the end of our redemption, the end of all the blessings that God is pleased to bestow upon us, even that we may bless, and praise, and magnify his great and glorious name for them: for he made all things for himself, for the manifestation of his own glory; and he endued man particularly with reason to discern the glory that shines forth in all his works, and with the use of speech, to declare, extol, and praise it, and by that means to glorify him; as himself saith, *Whoso offereth praise, he glorifieth me*, Psal. l. 23. And his apostle intimates, Rom. xv. 9, 10. Wherefore, they who live in the neglect of this duty, do not answer God's end in making them; which must needs be a great offence unto him, and provoke him to dash them in pieces as useless vessels, and destroy them for ever. Whereas they who are always praising God, are always doing the work he made them for, and sent them into the world about, and so always please him; for nothing pleaseth God so much, as for a man to thank and praise him, as St. Chrysostom observes in Eph. v. 19. and David himself, Psal. lxxix. 30, 31. civ. 33, 34. And therefore nothing prevents judgments, or procures mercy at the hands of God more, than this doth by Jesus Christ, 2 Chron. xx. 22. v. 12. And none live in his favour and under his protection so much, as they who are always praising and glorifying his holy name, with their lips, as well as in their lives.

And as there is nothing we can do more pleasing unto God, so nothing affords more pleasure to those who do it as they ought; for this being that which we were at first designed and fitted for, so far as we are restored to our primitive state and temper, it is natural to

us to be praising and glorifying God. But all natural actions have something of pleasure in them ; and this being the highest, and that to which all other tendencies must needs have most of all ; as they find by experience who are exercised in it. *My soul*, saith David, *shall be satisfied, even as it were with marrow and fatness when my mouth praiseth thee with joyful lips*, Psal. lxxii. 6. *O praise the Lord, for it is a good thing to sin, praises to our God ; yea, a joyful and pleasant thing is to be thankful*, Psal. cxlvii. 1 To recount and celebrate the wisdom, the power, the goodness, the mercy, the truth, and all the wonderful works of God, our Maker, our Saviour, our Sanctifier, our God, this is joyful and pleasant thing indeed : it is the work of heaven, the only place where perfect joy and pleasure can be had. Though we know but little of what they do there, we know they praise God there, and seldom read of any thing else they do. This is their constant business and recreation too, their employment and their pleasure both together ; and so it should be ours ; for we have the same obligations upon us to be always praising God as they have ; and it is our own fault we do not take pleasure in it as they do. And it is our fault that must needs be mended, before we can be truly happy ; for that we can never be, till we delight in praising God, more than in any thing in the world besides, as the glorified saints and angels do : and as even we desire to do it with them in heaven, we must begin to practise it upon earth, where we are sure to have the best company, the most glorious creatures that are joining with us in it ; as we do with them whensoever we praise God. Although we be by ourselves, and have none else to join with us in it, we praise God with angels, we praise God with the spirits of just men made perfect, we praise him with all the host of heaven, doing the same thing here below, which they at the same time are always doing above : how much more when we meet together in God's own house, and especially at his hol

able to do it, there we may well say or sing, as I heartily wish we could all now do with one heart and mouth, *It is very meet, right, and our bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto thee, O Lord, holy Father, almighty, everlasting God. Therefore with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name, evermore praising thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, &c.*

S E R M O N L X.

THE SUFFICIENCY OF SCRIPTURE.

2 TIM. iii. 16, 17

And it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works

HE that with David considers the heavens, the work of God's fingers, the moon and the stars which he hath ordained, cannot but with him also cry out, *Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?* Psal. viii. 3, 4. For who can but admire and wonder, that he who made such glorious creatures in heaven, should have any regard to those little worms upon earth, which were no sooner made by him, but they presently fell into disobedience and rebellion against him. This all mankind did in their first parents: and yet notwithstanding, to the wonder and amazement of the world, the almighty Creator of all things was graciously pleased not only to visit them, but to visit them with his salvation; to provide a Saviour for them, yea to become himself their Saviour, to save them from the sins they committed against himself, and from the punishments they had thereby deserved from him.

Neither was his way of doing it less wonderful than the thing he did. For as he made all things by his

word, so he saveth mankind by his word too. By his Word incarnate, and his word written, *the Word was made flesh*, and as such was offered up as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, or all mankind, *that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*. And that men might do that, *God at sundry times, and in divers manners, spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets; and in these last days he hath spoken to us by his Son*, and his apostles, and hath caused the word so spoken to be written, that all may read it, and thereby know how to believe, that they may be saved.

This is that written word, which we call the Scripture, given, as we have seen, by inspiration of God; and therefore is truly his word: and being his word, the word of God himself, it must needs be all true, as God himself is true: and we ought accordingly to believe and be fully persuaded of the truth and certainty of every thing that is there written, whether we do or do not understand it; for in this case our reason or understanding is no way concerned any further, than to search out the right sense and meaning of the words, what it is which God saith; which being once found out, our belief of it is not grounded upon our understanding it, but upon the word of God, which is infinitely beyond all other arguments and demonstrations in the world besides. It is indeed the only firm and infallible ground we have to build our faith upon, without which we could neither have known what to believe, nor could we have had sufficient reason to believe it, if we had known it. What knowledge could we have had of the creation of the world, the redemption of mankind, the resurrection of the dead; and the like articles of our faith, without the holy Scripture? And though we had happened to have heard of some such things which are necessary for all men to believe, yet how could we have believed them? They are not the objects of any of our senses, and therefore could never have come into our

minds by their means. Our reason, we find, often fails us in the common affairs of this world, so that we can hardly guess at what lies just before us ; how then can we trust that in the things that belong to another world, and are so much above us ? And if we had heard of them only from other men ; they, we know, are all fallible, apt to be deceived themselves, or may have a mind, for ought we know, to deceive us ; how then could we believe such things merely upon their report or testimony ; how could we be ever certain that what they said is true ? That we could never be, so long as we know they are all men, liable to mistakes and errors of all sorts, as much as we ourselves are. So that after all that can be said, there is no way possible for us to come to the knowledge and faith of such things, so as to rest satisfied and be fully persuaded in our minds of the truth and certainty of them, but only from the testimony of God himself.

Wherefore, that we might have no reason to doubt of such things as belong to our salvation, but might have all the assurance that could be of them, God himself was graciously pleased not only to cause them to be revealed to us, but to do it himself, that we might have his word for them, and accordingly believe them upon that, without all manner of hesitancy or doubting, how much soever they may seem above our comprehension : as the father of the faithful did, who having the word and promise of God, that he should have a son in his old age, *in whom all the nations of the earth should be blessed, he considered not the weakness of his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old ; neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb. He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God ; and being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able also to perform,* Rom. iv. 19, 20, 21. Such a faith it is that God now requires and expects from all those who have his written word ; whatsoever is there

written, we must not dispute or doubt how it can be ; but believe it therefore, because he said it, upon pain of eternal damnation ; for this is the great condition required on our parts in order to our being saved. So that no man ever was, or can be saved without it : and it is no wonder ; for not to believe what God saith, is the greatest affront that can be offered to his divine Majesty : it is to make God a liar, and to deny him the glory of his truth, the manifestation whereof was the great end wherefore he caused his word to be written ; that all the world might see how true the Lord is. And that is the reason that none of his divine perfections are so frequently mentioned in his holy word, as his mercy and truth : and nothing so peremptorily cominanded, as to believe in him and his word ; which after all, if men will not do, they can expect no other, but to find him true in punishing them according to his word, *with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power*, 2 Thess. i. 9.

But they who knowing it is impossible for God to lie, take his word for whatsoever is written in the holy Scripture, and live accordingly with a firm belief, and full persuasion of it upon their minds, such as is due to the word of truth itself, they are sure of all the happiness which is there promised in this life, as well as that which is to come : for exercising their faith continually upon God's holy word, they converse with the other world even while they live in this. Their *faith being the substance of things hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. by it they reckon themselves as sure of what God hath promised, as if they had it already ; and are as certain of what God hath said, as if they saw it with their eyes ; as certain that God governs the world, as that there is a world to govern ; as certain that he is wheresoever they are, as that they are there ; as certain that Christ died for sinners, as that they themselves are sinners ; as certain that he is now sitting at the right hand of God in heaven, as that there is a sun shin-

ing in the firmament ; as certain that he will judge them at the last day, as if they saw him now upon his judgment-seat : for these and such-like truths being revealed by God himself, they are always plain and evident before the eyes of all that believe his word ; who therefore walk by the light of God's word through all things relating to the other world, as they do by the light of the sun in this. By which means the word of God is of mighty use to them through the whole course of their lives, far greater than any can imagine, but they who feel it.

For though other people may read it over and over, and yet receive no benefit from it : they who really believe the Scripture was given by inspiration of God, and are conversant in it as such, they find it to be of such infinite advantage to them upon all occasions, that if there were no other arguments for it, that would be sufficient to convince them that it must come from infinite wisdom and goodness : nothing else being able to contrive a writing of such universal use to all who faithfully read it, that how many soever they are, and whatsoever their condition be, every one may meet with something there so proper and pertinent, as if it was designed for his very case. So that all the uses that may be made of this holy writing, can never particularly be reckoned upon ; and therefore I shall not offer at it, but shall only consider those four general heads to which the apostle reduceth them in my text, saying, that *it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.*

First therefore, the Scripture, being given by inspiration of God, *is profitable for doctrine*, or teaching us all things necessary for men to know, that they may be saved : I say, that they may be saved : for the holy Scripture was not intended to teach men mathematics, or logic, or natural philosophy, nor any other art or science, but only how to serve and glorify God upon earth, so as to get at last to heaven. Therefore it is

called, *the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls*, James i. 21 And in the verse before my text, the apostle saith, *The holy Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation.* That is to be wise indeed, and to good purpose. Whatsoever else goes under the name of wisdom, will be found at last to be no better than folly or madness, which may do us mischief, but never can do us any good. This will both make us good, and do us good, all the good we can desire: but this wisdom can be no way attained but only by the word of God; but there we may certainly find it; for *the law, or doctrine, of the Lord is an undefiled law, converting the soul: the testimony of the Lord is sure, and giveth wisdom unto the simple*, Psal. xix. 7 It was for this end that the holy Scriptures were written; *for whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning; that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope*, Rom. xv. 4. hope of eternal life through Christ our Saviour. According to that of his beloved disciple, *These things were written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life in his name*, John xx. 31.

This therefore being the end wherefore God was pleased to give us the Scriptures by his own inspiration, it cannot be imagined but that they fully answer the end for which he gave them, by teaching us all things necessary to our salvation, both what we must believe, and what we must do, that we must be saved. That we are there taught whatsoever is necessary to be believed, we cannot doubt, seeing nothing can be necessary to be believed, but what is there taught; for as we have seen already, we have no certain ground to believe any thing of that nature, but from the word and testimony of God himself. But we have the word and testimony of God for nothing but what is written in the holy Scriptures, or necessarily follows upon something that is so. And therefore what is neither expressly contained in the

holy Scriptures, nor may be clearly proved from them, cannot be the proper object of our faith, much less can it be necessary for us to believe it: if it was, God be sure would have revealed it to us, that we might believe it upon his word; which seeing he hath not done, we are not bound to believe it, but are rather bound to believe, that it is not necessary to be believed.

But whatsoever God hath said in his holy word, it is absolutely necessary for all men to believe it, and to believe it merely upon his word, otherwise he himself would never have told us of it. But seeing he hath told us of it, he hath thereby signified it to be his will that we should believe it upon his word, as ever we expect mercy and salvation from him.

And herein it is, that the Scripture is so profitable for doctrine, because we are there taught by God himself, whatsoever he would have us to believe, that we may obtain his favour and eternal life; what he would have us to believe concerning himself, his essence, his persons, his perfections, his works, what he hath done, and still doth in the world; what he would have us to believe concerning his Son, his eternal generation, his Godhead, his incarnation, his life, his death, his resurrection, his ascension into heaven, and the intercession which he there makes for those who believe in him; what he would have us to believe concerning his Holy Spirit, and the gifts and graces which proceed from him, and the wonderful works which he hath done, still doth, and ever will do in his church; what he would have us to believe concerning his said church and the communion of saints which are in it, concerning the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. All which articles of our faith are briefly contained in the Apostles' Creed, explained by those of the council of Nice, and of St. Athanasius, out of the holy Scriptures, upon which they are all grounded. These great doctrines, to which all other may be referred which are any way necessary to be believed, God him-

self hath taught us in his holy word ; and therefore it is not left to our choice whether we will believe them or no, but we must believe them upon his word, or we can never be saved, nor do any thing aright which is required of us in order to it ; our obedience to what he hath commanded being wholly founded upon our belief of what he hath revealed to us.

And as the holy Scripture is thus profitable for doctrine, by teaching us all things necessary to be believed ; so likewise by teaching us whatsoever is necessary to be done towards our obtaining eternal life ; for there God hath revealed his whole will to us, what he would have us do, both in relation to himself our Creator, and to our fellow-creatures. All which, his holy commandments, as we there read, he was pleased to reduce to ten general heads, which he solemnly proclaimed by his angels upon mount Sinai, then wrote them down with his own fingers upon two tables of stone, and afterwards explained them by his prophets, by his own Son, and by his apostles ; so that every one that will, may easily understand his divine pleasure in every particular, which therefore every one is bound to do ; and not only to understand, but also to perform what he so understands to be the will of God his maker. And as it is not enough for us to believe what God hath said, but we must therefore believe it because he said it ; so it is not enough to do what he commands, but we must do it therefore because he commands it, in sincere obedience to him, as he is the supreme Lawgiver, and universal Governor of the world, who alone hath power to enact laws which shall oblige all mankind ; as all those moral commandments do, which I have hitherto spoken of.

But he was pleased heretofore to make some laws, as he was in a peculiar manner the God and King of Israel, for the polity and government of that church and nation only as it then stood ; which therefore are not necessary to be received or observed in any other, no more than those ordinances are, about sacrifices and the

service of the tabernacle, which he instituted only to represent and typify the great work of man's salvation, as it should be transacted by Jesus Christ ; which therefore were only temporary, and expired in course at his death. But then he was pleased to command all men to believe in the said Jesus as the Christ and Saviour of the world ; and to ordain two sacraments, the one for the admission of all men into his church, by baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost : the other for the perpetual memory of his death, whereby he took away the sins of the world ; that as it was foreshewn by sacrifices all along from the beginning of the world until it happened ; so from that time forward to the end of the world, it might be commemorated by this sacrament.

This is the sum of those great truths which Almighty God hath revealed, and of the laws which he hath given to all mankind ; which being all taught in the Scripture, and can be learned no where but there ; therefore the Scripture is here said to be profitable for doctrine. *And if any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to this doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing,* 1 Tim. vi. 3. nothing that belongs to his peace and happiness.

The Scripture being thus profitable for doctrine, it must needs be so for *reproof* too, or, as the word signifies also, for conviction, or such reproof whereby a man may be convinced of his error, or sin ; for seeing all necessary truths are revealed in Scripture, whatsoever opinion a man espouseth, if there be nothing plainly revealed one way or other concerning it, it is unnecessary, and they sin against the laws of peace and charity, who contend about it. If it be agreeable to what is there revealed, it is certainly true ; and false, if contrary. So that if it can be proved, that the opinion which a man holds is contrary to what God himself

hath said in Scripture, he must be convinced that he is in an error ; it being as impossible for God to be so, as it is for both sides of a contradiction to be true. If this doth not convince him, nothing in the world can : this being the strongest, and most demonstrative way of arguing that can be used ; which none can offer to withstand, without falling into the grossest absurdities that mankind can be guilty of. Hence our Saviour himself took this course to convince the Jews of their errors, and particularly the Sadducees, *Ye do err*, said he, *not knowing the Scriptures*, Matt. xxii. 29. and then proved from thence that the dead shall rise again, so as to put them to silence, ver. 34. And it was out of Moses and the prophets, that he convinced his apostles that he ought to suffer, Luke xxiv. 27. In this, as in other things, his apostles also followed his steps ; as we find in their Epistles and Acts, where it is said, that St. Paul *reasoned with the Jews out of the Scriptures*, Acts xvii. 2. And this certainly, which is founded upon the word of God himself, is the highest way of reasoning that can be used, whereby to convince men of their errors in opinion.

As likewise of their sins or transgressions of God's law, which can never be done any other way, than from that law which they transgress : as, *I had not known sin but by the law : for I had not known lust or concupiscence, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet*, Rom. vii. 7. So neither could I convince another that what he doth is a sin, or unlawful, except I prove it to be contrary to some law which he is bound to observe. But if I can prove that he either doth that which Almighty God hath forbidden him to do ; or leaves that undone which he commands him to do ; if I can demonstrate this to him from God's own word, or, which is the same, from the Scripture, whether he will own it or no, he must be convinced in his conscience that it is a sin. And therefore the Scripture is so

highly profitable for reproof or conviction, that nothing can do it but that ; but that will do it so effectually, as to leave men without all excuse.

And seeing the Scripture is thus profitable for reproof and conviction, it follows in course that it is profitable also for correction ; that is, for amendment or reformation ; for when a man is once thoroughly convinced of his sin, he is in the ready way to forsake it, and can never be easy in his own mind until he doth so. As we see in St. Peter's auditors upon the day of Pentecost, when he out of Scripture had reproved them for their sin in denying and crucifying the Lord of glory, *they were pricked in the heart, and said to Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ?* Acts ii. 37 They were no sooner convinced of their sin, but they were presently solicitous what to do, whereby to shew their repentance of it, and their resolution never to fall into the like again. And upon the apostles directing them what to do, they believed in him whom they had before crucified, and became his disciples. Such mighty force had the word preached upon the minds of those who attentively hearkened to it.

But to make it still more profitable for correction or reformation, it hath pleased God, in his holy Scripture, to threaten such dreadful punishments to those who continue in sin and unbelief, and to promise such glorious rewards to those who repent and believe the Gospel, that nothing could ever have been invented of greater power upon the hearts of men, to take them off from sin, and turn them unto God : for there we find that *they who know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power,* 2 Thess. i. 8, 9. That they shall be condemned to that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels, Matt. xxv. 41 That *they shall be cast into utter*

darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth, ver. 30. Where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched, Mark ix. 44. Wherefore knowing from the Scripture this terror of the Lord, we may well persuade men to leave their sins, 2 Cor. v. 11. If such terrible punishments as these, denounced by Almighty God himself, will not do it, what can ?

Especially if we consider also on the other side, that it is there written, *that eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, 1 Cor. ii. 9. that they shall be made like to the holy angels, Luke xx. 36. and live with Christ himself, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him, John xvii. 24. That they shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43. In the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, chap. xxv. 34. So that as the wicked must go into everlasting punishment, and the righteous shall go into life eternal, ver. 46. what stronger motive, what greater encouragement can there be than this which the Scripture affords, for all men to leave their sins, amend their ways, and come into the number of the righteous ?*

How they may do that, is the last thing which the apostle here saith the Scripture is profitable for; *it is profitable for instruction in righteousness, i. e. to teach us what we must do, that we may become such as shall be accepted of, and accounted righteous not only before men, but God himself. This no man could ever learn any other way but only by the Scripture ; but there we are fully taught it.*

For there we are taught all the commandments of God, in doing of which, that righteousness consisteth which his law requires. *It shall be our righteousness, saith Moses, if we observe to do all these commandments before the Lord our God, as he hath commanded us, Deut. vi. 25.*

But we are taught withal by the Scripture, as well as by our own experience, that of ourselves, or by our own natural strength, we can never do all these commandments, at least, not so as we are there commanded to do them. Wherefore we are further taught in holy Scripture how to obtain the grace and assistance of God himself in doing whatsoever he hath commanded, even by faith in Jesus Christ; that if we believe in him, and accordingly trust on the promises which God hath made in him to that purpose, his Spirit shall be always ready to assist us, *his grace shall be sufficient for us, and his strength made perfect in our weakness.* So that *we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us,* Phil. iv. 13.

But notwithstanding the strength and assistance which we receive from Christ, to do all that God commands, yet such is the weakness and corruption of our nature, that we do nothing so exactly as he commands it to be done: and therefore nothing that in strictness of law can be termed righteous. But in this also the Scripture helps us out, teaching us that Jesus Christ, who knew no sin, was made sin, or a sin-offering for us, *that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21. *that we may be found in him, not having our own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith,* Phil. iii. 9. Whereby we are given to understand, that by our faith in Christ, besides our own righteousness, which we have in ourselves, we have another in him whose members we are, that most perfect righteousness which he fulfilled in our nature being reckoned ours, whereby all the defects of our own are perfectly made up, and ours, though in itself imperfect, yet is acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. who is therefore *the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth,* Rom. x. 4. The whole law being accomplished by him, and in him by all that truly believe in him, for the righteousness which is there re-

quired. All which being taught in the Scripture, that is so profitable for instruction in righteousness, as well as for doctrine, reproof, and correction, that any servant or man of God, though he be a prophet or apostle, much more he that is of a lower rank, may thereby be as perfect as he is now required to be, being thoroughly furnished from thence to every good work that God commands him to do, and to his doing it so as that God will accept of it as good through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Having thus expressed our thoughts upon the holy Scripture, as given by inspiration of God, and as profitable for all things requisite to our being holy here, and happy for ever; how can we forbear to admire and adore the infinite goodness and mercy of the almighty Creator of the world, to us poor sinful creatures upon earth, in that notwithstanding our unworthiness of the least of all his favours, he hath been graciously pleased to reveal himself and his holy will to us in writing, and that too in so wonderful a manner, that we have his own word, his divine infallible word, for every thing that is there written, which, next to the Word incarnate, is certainly the greatest blessing that could be bestowed upon us, and we ought to value it accordingly; by preferring the holy Scripture, not only before all other books that ever were or can be written, but likewise before all things else that we have, or ever can have, in this world. *The law of thy mouth*, said David, *is better unto me than thousands of gold and silver*, Psal. cxix. 72. So it really is, and ought to be so esteemed by every one of us. It is our unspeakable happiness that we have it in our language so common among us. We must take heed that we do not prize it the less, as many I fear do, because it is common; but we must rather praise God the more for it, and strive all we can to express our thankfulness for such an inestimable favour, in deed, as well as word.

For that purpose, we must first observe what is there commanded by Christ himself; we must *search the*

Scriptures, John v. 39. as the Bereans did, and are highly commended for it by the same spirit that wrote them, saying, *These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether these things were so*, Acts xvii. 11. They did not search the poets or philosophers, nor considering what their forefathers had told them, nor what their own carnal reason suggested to them, but they searched the Scriptures; taking it for granted, that what is written there is true, but not knowing whether any thing else be so. So must we upon all occasions consult the Scriptures, as the lively oracles of God, the only oracles that he hath given to the world; and accordingly make them, as David did, *our delight and our counsellors*, Psal. cxix. 24. And whatsoever straits or difficulties we are in, if we do but always follow the advice and counsel which is there given us, we can never do amiss.

But then we must have a care that we be not in the number of those St. Peter speaks of, *who wrest the Scriptures to their own destruction*, 2 Pet. iii. 16. There were such it seems in those days, and so there are in ours. To prevent which horrid abuse of God's holy word, or at least that none of you may be guilty of it, whensoever ye take the Bible into your hands, remember whose word it is, it is the word of God himself, and therefore beg of him to open your eyes, that ye may see the wondrous things which are there written, Psal. cxix. 18. And then read it, not as ye do other books, but with that reverence and godly fear, as if ye heard what ye read at that very moment uttered by a voice from heaven, from whence it came at first. And therefore laying aside all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, receive with meekness the ingrafted word, which is able to save your souls, James i. 21. And whether you read or hear it read, *receive it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that be-*

lieve, 1 Thess. ii. 13. Upon those who do not believe, it hath no effect at all ; but it works effectually upon all that do. Which therefore that it may upon you, you must be sure to mix every thing you read with *faith*, Heb. iv. 2. With such a faith as is due to the word of him who cannot lie ; and then ye cannot fail of profiting by it.

For which purpose, you must fix this as an undoubted principle upon your heart, that, as our Saviour saith, *the Scripture cannot be broken*, John x. 35. *It is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than one tittle of the law to fail*, Luke xvi. 17. That whatsoever is there said, is infallibly true ; and whatsoever is foretold, threatened, or promised, hath or shall most certainly be accomplished : it is impossible it should be otherwise, as impossible as it is for God to lie. Keep but this always fixed upon your minds, and you will think yourselves to live in another world ; nay, ye will really do so ; for by this means, whilst other people are led only by their outward senses, minding little or nothing but what they see, or hear, or touch, or smell, or taste, you will have another kind of sense in your souls, a sense of those spiritual things that are revealed in God's holy word, so as to be touched to the quick with them, and affected more sensibly, than with any thing you meet with in this world. The articles of the Christian faith will not seem strange to you, but as evident as any thing that is so of itself ; your senses will be exercised to discern both good and evil, Heb. v. 14. You will *taste the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come*, chap. vi. 5. Ye will *look at those things which are not seen*, 2 Cor. iv. 18. Ye will not only know, but feel that God is always present with you ; that his eye is upon you ; that his hand upholds you ; that his only-begotten Son became man, and died for you ; that *he was delivered for your offences, and raised again for your justification* ; that he is now sitting at the right hand of the Father ; that he is your Advocate there, making in-

tercession for you ; that *in him ye have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins* ; that in him Almighty God is your Father and your God ; that whensoever ye meet together in his name, he is in the midst of you ; that whatsoever good thing you ask in his name, shall be granted you ; that his Holy Spirit is alway ready to direct, assist, and comfort you ; that his holy angels minister unto you ; that all things work together for your good. For these, and many such like things, ye have the word of God himself in the holy Scripture ; and if ye accordingly take his word for them, ye will feel it to be, as the apostle saith, *quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword*, Heb. iv. 12. Imprinting these great truths so deep in your hearts, that your whole souls will be possessed with a sense and feeling of them, more than of any thing else ; and then you will find by your own experience, that all Scripture is indeed given by inspiration of Almighty God ; and will need no other arguments to convince you, that *it is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness*, and for every thing that is necessary to your obtaining eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord.

SERMON LXI.

THE PREFERENCE OF SPIRITUAL FOOD TO NATURAL.

JOHN vi. 27

Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you ; for him hath God the Father sealed.

ALTHOUGH we live in a place where the Christian religion is professed, we see but few that do any more than profess it ; some not so much : for there is one sort of people risen up among us, who have laid aside the public worship of God, both the sacraments that Christ ordained, and every thing else that can shew them to be Christians. And of those who were once baptized into Christ, and so were made his disciples or Christians, and still profess themselves to be so ; some contradict their profession by their practice, in separating from the church of Christ, and *causing divisions contrary to the doctrine* that he taught, Rom. xvi. 17 but the greatest part take up and content themselves with the bare profession of his religion, without ever concerning themselves about believing or doing what is required in it.

It is of such I shall speak at this time ; and yet not I, but Christ Jesus : for I come not in my own name, but his ; and shall say nothing but what I have his word and warrant for : and I hope you, who profess yourselves to be his scholars and disciples, will hearken very diligently to whatsoever he, your great Lord and

Master, saith to you, and particularly to what he saith in the words I have now read.

It is true, these words were first spoken to the unbelieving Jews, who having seen our Lord feeding *five thousand* people with five barley loaves and two small fishes, and having themselves been fed to the full with that miraculous food, they went about next day again to seek him ; and finding that he was gone to the other side of the sea of Tiberias, they took shipping, and came to him there also ; when our Lord saw them, he knew that they were of the number of those which he had fed with a miracle the day before, and that they now came after him again, not because they had seen the miracle, and were convinced by it that he was indeed the Christ, the Son of God, so as to become his disciples ; but to get another meal's meat of his divine dressing. *Verily, verily*, saith he, *I say unto you, Ye seek me, not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled*, ver. 26. Wherefore, according to his usual custom of catching at all opportunities of doing good, he took occasion from their following him after this manner, only for bodily food, to give them this wholesome and most necessary advice, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you*. And though he gave it at first to them, yet he caused it to be recorded among his divine oracles, as a standing rule to be observed by all, especially those who shall follow him, and profess themselves to be his disciples ; as all here present do : and are therefore obliged in duty to him, as well as for their own interest, to learn and practise the great lesson which he hath here set you. In which he teacheth you both what ye ought not, and what ye ought to labour after : both which parts of his divine lesson I shall endeavour to make so clear and plain, that ye may all learn and understand your Master's meaning and pleasure in them, and strive, for the future, to act accordingly.

First therefore, he saith, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth.* What he means by labouring, I need not tell you ; that you all know is a word that signifies a man's taking care and pains about getting something which he wants, or keeping what he hath. In which sense our Lord here commands, that ye *labour not for the meat which perisheth*, that is, for the things of this life, and especially such as belong to the support of it, which he here calls by the general name of meat, because it was that which the Jews came to him for at this time, and so gave him occasion to speak these words. Wherein he commands you therefore, not to take too much care or pains about food, or raiment, or any thing which concerns only this present life. I say, too much, because he doth not mean, that you should take no care or pains at all about them, so far as they are necessary to the support of yourselves and families : for he himself elsewhere, by his apostle, commands you *to study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands*, 1 Thess. iv. 11. *That if any would not work, neither should he eat*, 2 Thess. iii. 10. *And let him that stole, saith he, steal no more, but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth*, Eph. iv. 28. Where you see, he doth not only permit but require you to labour, and that too not only for yourselves, but other people, that ye may be able to supply their wants as well as your own : especially such as are related to you ; *for if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel*, 1 Tim. v. 8. Such a one, it seems, in the sight of God himself, is so far from being a Christian or a believer, whatsoever he may pretend, that he is not so good as an infidel or unbeliever. For the very law of nature, by which the infidels were governed, taught them to provide for their parents and kindred that were in want. But Christ came not to destroy that law, but to vindi-

cate, explain, refine, and enforce it. And therefore he is so far from indulging men in sloth and idleness, so far from commanding or suffering them to neglect the calling in which he hath placed them, for the maintenance of themselves and their families, that he looks upon such as none of his disciples, but as bad, nay worse, than the very infidels themselves. It is not therefore in this sense that he commands you *not to labour for the meat which perisheth*.

But he commands you, first, not to labour for it as these people did to whom the words were first spoken, who left their trades, and houses, and business at home, to seek for food abroad, where they had no ground to expect it any other way than by a miracle : you must not be like them ; ye must not leave your callings and employments wherein you were bred, and so the ordinary way in which God hath set you, whereby to provide necessities for yourselves and families by God's blessing, which he hath promised upon your endeavours, and then take any extraordinary or unlawful course of it ; or think as these people did, that you shall be fed with miracles, without taking any care about it yourselves, much less must ye pretend religion, when your design is only to get bread or money, as these people did, who followed Christ ; but it was only for the loaves, not out of any love to him or his religion : which is the case, I fear, of too many among us, who follow this or that particular sect or profession in religion, out of a desire, as they pretend, to serve and worship God better ; when, after all, it is their own worldly interest they seek : if they would but deal impartially with themselves, and narrowly search into their own hearts, I fear many will find that to be at the bottom. This is that which our Lord condemns in those that followed him ; and therefore commands that ye be not guilty of it. That ye *labour not for the meat that perisheth*, under the disguise and pretence of labouring for that *which endureth unto everlasting life*.

He commands you also not to labour for that only ; as these people had no other design in rambling about, but only to get another belly-full of good victuals. I wish they had been the only people that ever did so ; but, alas ! this is the common practice of most men in the world, even to mind nothing but their bellies, and to provide enough for them : as if they came into the world for no other end, but to eat and drink a while, and then go out again ; for what do most people do besides ? It is a great while before they are capable of doing any thing else. And when they come to years of discretion, so as to be able to serve God, and work out their own salvation, yet they spend their whole time, week after week, year after year, in nothing else but what concerns this present life, labouring night and day, either to get what to eat, or to eat what they have gotten, or to lay it up for other people to eat it ; this is their business all their life long, how long soever it is : the only business they ever mind or think of, unless perhaps a little upon the Lord's-day, when the laws of the land will not suffer them to follow their particular callings openly ; but then also many do it privately, and so spend all their days in labouring for nothing but only the meat that perisheth ; as if they had neither God to serve, nor souls to save. I doubt there are some such here present, and heartily wish you would take some time to consider, that you have another world to live in as well as this ; and that he who alone can save you, doth here expressly require, that you do not thus labour only for the meat that perisheth ; nor chiefly neither, that you do not make it your great and chief design, as many do, to heap up the riches, or enjoy the pleasures of the world ; but that ye *seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness* in the first place, Matt. vi. 33. And other things only after that, or in order to it. In which lower sense ye may and ought to labour for the meat that perisheth, so far as it is needful to your present subsistence ; but your chief care and la-

bour must be for that which endureth to everlasting life.

This therefore is that which our Lord commanded in these words, according to the idiom of the sacred writings, and his common way of speaking in the like cases: as where he saith, *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice*; that is, mercy rather than sacrifice, Matt. ix. 13. So here, *Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but rather, or chiefly, for that which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.* Where ye may first observe, that he would have you all labour, not sit still and do nothing. The idle and unprofitable servant, that hid his master's talent in a napkin, and did nothing with it, was cast into utter darkness; and so will ye be too, unless ye labour and take pains, so as to *work out your salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. It is a great work ye have to do, the greatest ye have to do in the world; and it can never be done effectually, without much labour and pains, far more than men commonly take about it. And that is the reason why there are so few that effect it; but most of those also who labour for it, labour in vain, because they do not labour enough; they do some things, but not all that is required of them. And what they do, they do it carelessly and slothfully, without labouring or taking that pains about it, which is necessary to the accomplishing of so great a work, and then it is no wonder that they never accomplish it. And hence it is, that he, by whom alone we can accomplish it, requires you all to labour, and to labour with that diligence, earnestness, zeal, and constancy, that such a work requires.

But what would he have you labour for? For the meat which *endureth to everlasting life*; that is, for all things necessary to your getting to heaven, and living there for ever; which he calls meat, because they who gave him occasion to speak the words, came after him for meat; or something to refresh and support their

lives in this world : which our Lord perceiving, he bids them not to be so solicitous about the things of this world, as the next. And that they might better understand his meaning, he accommodates his speech to the occasion, and bids them not to labour so much for their bodily food ; but for such meat as will nourish and preserve their souls to everlasting life ; as all things do which tend to the making them pure and holy, and capable of seeing and enjoying God, and may therefore be properly called the food and nourishment of the soul, that whereby it is kept in health, and strength, and life. And so the holy Scripture delights to speak. As where the prophet saith, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money ; come ye, buy, and eat ; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Wherefore do ye spend your money for that which is not bread ? and your labour for that which satisfieth not ? hearken diligently unto me, and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness. Incline your ear, and come unto me ; hear, and your soul shall live*, Isa. lv. 1, 2, 3. This is good and pleasant, strong and excellent food indeed, by which our souls may live. But it is not taken in at the mouth, but at the ear, by *inclining the ear*, as the prophet speaks, *and hearkening diligently to the word of God*. It is that which entering in at the ear, nourisheth and refresheth the soul, therefore called, *the milk of the word*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. Even *the word of righteousness*, Heb. v. 13. Because by it the soul is nourished with righteousness, as the body is by milk. Hence is that of our Saviour, *Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled*, Matt. v. 6. implying, that righteousness is both meat and drink to the soul, and that all who accordingly hunger and thirst after it, shall be filled with it. For righteousness, as the word here signifies, containing under it all manner of virtue and goodness, is that without which the soul is dead, *dead*, as the apo-

stle saith, *in trespasses and sins*, Eph. ii. 1. But by it the soul lives the life that is proper for a soul or spirit to live, acts and moves in its own sphere, and brings forth its proper fruit, therefore called, *the fruit of righteousness*, Phil. i. 11 *which endureth for ever*, or, as our Lord here speaks, *unto everlasting life*. This therefore is the meat that he requires you to labour for, even *that ye may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of him, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. That *giving all diligence, you add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity*, 2 Pet. i. 5, 6, 7 *For if these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ*, ver. 8. but will both live the life, and die the death of the righteous, and so go with them into life eternal.

But that ye may better apprehend both the quality of this meat which endureth unto everlasting life, and also where ye may have it, our Lord here adds, it is that *which he, the Son of man shall give unto you*. Whereby he hath given you to understand, that although you must labour for it, or otherwise ye can never have it; yet, after all your labour, it is he only that gives it to you; for it is he only that hath it to give; but he hath it in himself. Hark what he himself here saith, *I am the bread of life. I am the living bread, which came down from heaven. If any man eat of this bread, he shall live for ever. And the bread which I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world*, John vi. 48, 51. *Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood,*

dwelleth in me, and I in him. As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me, ver. 53, &c. And that we may not mistake his meaning, as some of his auditors did, he afterwards adds, *It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing. The words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life, ver. 63.* Whereby he plainly discovered, that all that he had said concerning eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, is to be understood only in a spiritual sense: not that we could eat that very flesh which he assumed, and drink that very blood which was spilt upon the cross; that is so absurd and impossible, that no man in his senses can take his words in such a carnal sense as that. But his meaning is, that he having taken our flesh upon him, and offered it, together with the blood thereof, as a sacrifice for the sins of the world, they who believe in him do as really partake of that sacrifice, and of all the benefits of it, as if they had eaten of the very flesh that was sacrificed, as the Jews did of the paschal lamb. By which means Almighty God, being atoned and reconciled to them, gives them that Holy Spirit, which is united to and always accompanieth the flesh of Christ, to be a standing principle of new life in them, to nourish and strengthen them with all true grace and virtue, as truly and really as our bodies are fed and supported by what we eat and drink. So that the whole drift and design of this divine discourse is briefly comprehended in that short sentence wherewith he begins it, and which may serve as a key to open all that follows, saying; *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth in me hath everlasting life, ver. 47*

From hence we may see also, by the way, into the meaning of such expressions when used by our Lord in the institution of his last supper, saying of the sacramental bread, *Take, eat, this is my body.* And of the cup, *Drink ye all of it: for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the re-*

mission of sins, Matt. xxvi. 26, 27, 28. For these expressions are doubtless to be understood in the same sense here, as those in St. John before mentioned. For though our Lord did not then ordain this holy sacrament, yet he used words so very like to those in the institution of it, that St. John having recorded them, did not think it necessary to describe, as all the other Evangelists did, the institution of his last supper, nor what words he then used, they being much the same with those which he had before recorded, as spoken by our Lord upon another occasion. But there is this difference to be observed; that in St. John he only saith, *that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed*: but in the sacrament, he offers this his body to be eaten, and his blood to be drank, by all that come to him. So that all who receive that holy sacrament with a quick and lively faith, do really partake of all the blessings which he merited by his body and blood being broken and shed for the sins of the world; and so, as our church expresseth it, “the body and blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the Lord’s supper.” And their souls are there strengthened and refreshed by the body and blood of Christ, as their bodies are by the bread and wine. This therefore is the meat which endureth to everlasting life, and which our Saviour here saith, *he will give unto you*, even unto all that believe in him; so that they may all say with St. Paul, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13.

Nothing now remains to be explained in the words, but the reason which our Lord here gives for his last assertion. He hath said, that the meat which endureth to everlasting life, is that which he, the Son of man, shall give. And though his word and promise is a sufficient ground for our faith; yet for the greater confirmation of it, he adds, *for him hath the Father sealed*, that is, the Father hath sanctified and sent him

into the world to give life unto the world, as the bread of life, *that a man may eat thereof, and not die*, John x. 36. vi. 50. And as princes, when they send an ambassador into a foreign country, confirm his commission under their seal : so the Father confirmed his mission of the Son of man, by giving him the seal of the Spirit, Eph. i. 13. He did it at his baptism, when he was solemnly inaugurated into his office, Matt. iii. 17 and also by the wonderful works which he did ; to which he himself therefore appeals, as an undeniable argument that he came from the Father, John x. 37, 38. So that he was confirmed in his office, as it were, under the broad seal of heaven, that we may not doubt, but firmly believe, that he is indeed the bread that came down from heaven, and that he came for that end and purpose, that we might have life, *and that we might have it more abundantly*, John x. 10. and, by consequence, that he will certainly do as he hath said, even give the meat that endureth unto everlasting life, to all that labour after it.

But then the great question is, how we must labour for this meat, that we may be sure to get it ? or, which is the same, how we may seek so as to obtain that everlasting life, which the Son of man promiseth to give ? He promiseth to give it, but it is to those only who labour for it ; and that labour so as he would have them. Otherwise they will labour in vain, and to no purpose, as many do ; *Many*, saith he, *shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able*, Luke xiii. 24. because they seek amiss ; they do not observe the rules that he hath set them for it ; and then it is no wonder that, after all their labour and pains, they miss of it. That this therefore may not be your case, I shall endeavour to shew, in as plain and perspicuous terms as I can, how you all ought to labour for this meat which endureth unto everlasting life, if you desire in good earnest to have it.

If you desire, I say, in good earnest to have it ; for that is the first thing required to your labouring aright

for it, even, that you heartily desire it, and set yourselves in good earnest about looking after it, more than after all things in the world besides ; otherwise you will but beat about the bush, and never find it : ye may do something perhaps towards it, but not all that is required ; and what ye do, you will do it with that coldness and indifferency, that it will come to nothing, unless your minds be wholly bent upon it, and resolved to go through with it. Whereas if ye really *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, Christ himself saith, *you shall be filled*, Matt. v. 6. If you earnestly desire and prefer it above all things here below, and accordingly make it your chief care and study to attain it, there is none of you but, through Christ, may certainly attain it ; for he himself hath said you shall. Let this, therefore, be the first step you make towards it ; make no longer any vain excuses : resolve in the name of Christ, that from this time forward you will, by his assistance, labour with all your might for the meat which endureth to everlasting life ; and then you will be sure to have it, as sure as God's word is true.

But for that purpose you must observe the method here prescribed for it. You must not labour any longer with so much care and anxiety for the meat that perisheth ; but you must keep your bodies under, by constant temperance, and frequent abstinence, or fasting, that you may be rightly disposed, for that which endureth to everlasting life ; and able to endure all the labour and pains that is requisite to the obtaining of it. Remember the words of the great apostle, *Every one that striveth for the mastery, is temperate in all things. Now they do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible : I therefore so run, not as uncertainly ; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air : but I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection ; lest that by any means, when I have preached unto others, I myself should be a cast-away*, 1 Cor. ix. 25, 26, 27

Being thus resolved and disposed for it, ye must *desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. *that ye may grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, 2 Pet. iii. 18. *till ye come into the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ*, Eph. iv. 13. This you can never do without the ministry of the word, nor by it neither, unless you hear, read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest it, so as to turn it into proper nourishment for your souls; which that you may, ye must always mix it with faith in the hearing of it, Heb. iv. 2. You must receive it, not as the word of men *but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them who believe*, 1 Thess. ii. 13. To other people it is a mere dead letter, without any life, or motion, or power at all. But in those who believe, it works effectually, to the purifying and cleansing their hearts from all vicious and corrupt humours, and to the strengthening them in all true grace and virtue: so that by the word abiding in them, they are made so strong, as to be able *to overcome the world*, 1 John ii. 14. *to work righteousness: to run with patience the race that is set before them*, Heb. xii. 1 and *to work out their salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12. And the great reason is, because, *if ye abide in Christ, and his words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you*, John xv. 7. They are Christ's own words, and therefore ye must believe them, and accordingly pray to God in his name *to cleanse the thoughts of your hearts, by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit, that ye may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name. That his grace may be always sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in your weakness: that the power of Christ may rest upon you: that ye may do all things through him that strengtheneth you*. This you must pray for every day, as you

do for your daily bread : you do it for the meat which perisheth, how much more for that which endureth unto eternal life. If you really desire that, you must never let a day go over your heads without praying for it morning and evening, and at other times when you can get an opportunity : and that too, both privately, every one by himself, and publicly in the church with other good people there met together for that purpose. Unless you do this ; if you can go a whole day together without saying your prayers, you may be confident that you have no appetite to this spiritual food, not so much as you have for bodily. There is never a one, I dare say, among you, but feed your bodies every day in the year ; and if ye had the same care of your souls, as ye have for your bodies, you could not forbear but feed them too, by praying every day for that meat which will preserve them to everlasting life : which therefore I must advise and beseech you all to do ; and to do it heartily, sincerely, earnestly, as for your life ; for your life, your eternal life depends upon it. And that ye may never pray in vain, ye must always do it in the name of Christ : it is he, as ye have heard, that gives this spiritual food ; and therefore it is in his name only, and for his sake, that you must pray for it ; believing and trusting in him, that he, according to his promise, will do whatsoever ye ask in his name, John xiv. 14. And so exercising your faith continually in him, to sanctify and strengthen your souls with his grace and Holy Spirit, that they may be preserved to everlasting life.

This is the chief work to be done, without which, all your labouring will avail you nothing : as appears from the words following my text ; for our Lord having required them to labour or work *for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life*, the people said unto him, *What shall we do, that we might work the works of God ? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God, that ye believe in him whom he hath sent*, ver. 28, 29. This is the work, the great

work upon which all the rest depend, and from which they receive their efficacy, and attain their end. For it is by this our believing in him, that we eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and so have eternal life, as he himself here saith, ver. 54.

And that we may the better do it in the sacrament of his last supper, he gives us his body to eat, and his blood to drink; that receiving it with a quick and lively faith, we may be strengthened and refreshed by it in the inward man. *For the cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?* 1 Cor. x. 16. And seeing it is the communion of the body and blood of Christ, every worthy communicant, or faithful receiver of those holy mysteries, actually feeds upon the bread of life, the meat that endureth to life everlasting. Which therefore all that hunger, and thirst, and labour after, cannot but thankfully embrace all opportunities of receiving that holy sacrament.

And they who slight, or neglect, or seldom come at it, have too much cause to suspect, that whatsoever they may pretend, they do not observe, but act just contrary to what our Saviour here commands: they labour for the meat that perisheth, not for that which endureth unto everlasting life.

Which being the case of many, if not of most here present, give me leave to deal plainly with you, and to admonish you, as you tender his favour, or your own welfare, to take more care for the future, to do the work which your Lord and Saviour hath here set you. Remember, he is your Lord, and therefore may command you what he pleaseth, and you are bound to obey him: and he is your Saviour too, and therefore ye may be sure that he commands you nothing but what is necessary to be done in order to your being saved. Wherefore, if you care not whether you be saved or no, you may still go on in labouring only for the meat that

perisheth : but if you have any real desire of that which endureth unto everlasting life, set yourselves in good earnest upon labouring for it ; as your Lord and Saviour here commands you ; and gives you likewise such reasons for it, that we need not go from the command itself for arguments whereby to prevail with all sober and considering persons to observe it.

For consider, first, that what you labour for besides is only the meat that perisheth ; that perisheth in the using, and will cause you to do so too, if you set your hearts and take too much pains about it ; *meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God will destroy both it and them*, 1 Cor. vi. 13. And so he will all that you labour for in this world ; *for this I say, brethren, the time is short : it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away*, chap. vii. 29, 30, 31 It is not long but this world will be quite out of fashion, its figure altered, and all things in it turned upside down : and what will then become of all you laboured for ? or of yourselves that laboured for it ? You, be sure, in a short time will be turned out of possession, and all that ye have gotten will go to other people, and perhaps to such as you never heard of ; who then would labour for such meat as this ? meat that will not keep, but presently turns to rottenness and putrefaction. Meat that may clog and surfeit, but can never satisfy you ; for nothing can do that but what is durable and lasting ; but this perisheth, and is in a manner gone as soon as gotten : and therefore it can be worth no man's while to spend much time to get it.

It is true, if we were always to live in this world : if there was not another world to live in as well as this ; and if we could keep and enjoy there, what we have

gotten here, something might be said in excuse for it ; but seeing we are not only sure that we must go out of this world ere long, but likewise that we can carry nothing along with us, but must leave all we have got behind us : seeing there is not only another world to live in, but a world where we must live for ever : and seeing all that we have gotten here, will stand us in no stead there, unless it be to torment and vex us, that we have spent so much time in getting it ; it is one of the most unaccountable things in nature, that men, who pretend to act as reasonable creatures, should labour so earnestly as they do for this meat that perisheth : especially considering that we ourselves have known some who got much, and lived great, while they were in this world ; but now they are gone out of it, other people have all they ever got, and never thank them for it, and are never the wiser nor better for it, no more than they were that got it. Which one thing duly weighed, would be enough to prevail with all men faithfully to observe this divine command which our Saviour lays upon all, saying, *Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life* : which never perisheth, but endures for ever ; and that endureth not to our hurt or trouble, but unto everlasting life. This is meat worth labouring for indeed ; happy are they that after all their labour can attain it ; they will live in perfect health, and strength, and vigour, both of body and mind ; they will live in joy, and bliss, and glory, the highest that can be imagined ; they will live with the holy angels, with Christ, with God himself, and enjoy all the pleasures that are at his right hand, and that too, not for some few years or ages only, but for evermore ; and so be as happy as it is possible for creatures to be made. Who in his right wits would not labour for this meat before all things in the world ? in labouring for other things, you labour only for the meat that perisheth, and so will avail you nothing at

long run ; whereas by labouring for this, you labour for all things that are or can be good for you, and may have them too ; the things of this life also, so far as they are needful for you. For Christ himself hath assured you, that if *ye first seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness, all such things shall be added to you*, Matt. vi. 33. They shall be added so, that you shall have them, and that too which you sought in the first place, even *the meat which endureth unto everlasting life*.

And that is the last argument used in my text, wherefore ye should labour for that meat, because it is that which the Son of man shall or will give unto you. Ye may labour for other meat, and never get it : but if ye labour for this, ye are sure to have it ; for ye have the word and promise of God himself for it.

Though ye cannot get it by your labour, yet upon your labouring for it, he will give it to you : to every one of you, without exception : *for him that cometh unto me*, saith he, *I will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37. Whosoever therefore shall labour so as to come unto him for it, can never miss of it, but is certain to have it, as God hath said it.

Let us therefore now resolve by God's assistance to do so. Let others, if they please, throw away their short-lived days upon the meat that perisheth, upon the fading vanities of this transient world. Let us remember that we have souls to save, immortal souls, that must live either in heaven or hell for ever. And therefore while we are in the body, let us labour above all things for that spiritual food that will nourish and preserve our souls unto everlasting life. Let us exercise ourselves continually in the word of God, in fasting, and praying, and feeding upon his most blessed body and blood, that we may grow wise, and humble, and holy, and just, and good, and pure, both in heart and life ; that we may know, and love, and fear, and serve, and honour God

with a perfect heart, and a willing mind, all the rest of our days, and so may live with a constant dependence and trust on him to carry us through all the changes and chances of this mortal life, so as to bring us at last to that everlasting life, which he hath promised in Jesus Christ our Lord.



SERMON LXII.

THE PREFERENCE OF THINGS INVISIBLE AND ETERNAL,
TO VISIBLE AND TEMPORAL.

2 COR. iv. 18.

While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen ; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.

HE that impartially views the present state of mankind, or even that of Christendom itself, must needs wonder at the strange corruptions that are crept into it ; for he may easily see, not only the rest of the world, but the greatest part of those which are called Christians, acting scarce like men, but rather like the beasts that perish : looking no higher than the earth they tread on, nor further than while they tread on it : living as without God in the world, and without any regard to a future state, although they profess to believe both. But whatsoever they profess, be sure they really believe neither ; for if they did they could never spend their time, as they commonly do, in nothing else but scraping the dust of the ground together, or throwing it about ; either in getting the riches, as they are called, of this life, or else in spending what they have gotten, according as their senses and humours lead them ; as if they had no such thing as reason, much less religion, to rule and govern them.

This is the case of all men by nature, and of most of

those too, who name the name of Christ, but not of all. He hath a flock, though it be *πολίμνιον μικρόν*, a very *little flock*, Luke xii. 32. that looks farther than the pasture where they feed. There always have been, and still are, some few upon earth, who, by their faith in him, have their eyes opened, so as to see into the other world, things that are invisible, and lie perfectly hid to all other mortals. These St. Paul here speaks of; and reckoning himself, as he certainly was, in the number of them, he saith, *We look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.*

He is here speaking of the difficulties and troubles which he and the rest of his fellow-servants met with in doing the work which their master Christ hath set them, and shewing the reason wherefore, notwithstanding that, they fainted not, but rather went on with greater courage and resolution in the accomplishing of it, even, *because this light affliction, saith he, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, ver. 17. But lest any should not see into the force of this argument, he explains it, by adding, *while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.* As if he had said, they who mind only the things of this life, may well be discouraged at the afflictions which attend the service of God. But that is not our case; our eye is only upon the other world, and the eternal glory which shall there be conferred upon those who serve him faithfully in this. And therefore we may well be *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

But though that was the occasion of the apostle's writing these words, yet he doth not confine them to that occasion, but makes use of that, to shew how all true Christians, such as he was, are always looking at

things not seen in general: which at first sight may seem to be a great paradox, if not a contradiction. But I shall endeavour to make it so clear, that ye may all see into the truth as well as into the usefulness of it. And for that purpose, shall first explain the words, and then apply them.

First therefore, that we may understand the true meaning of these words, we must consider,

I. What is here meant by things that are seen.

II. What by the things which are not seen: and what by looking at things not seen.

III. The reason which the apostle here gives for it; because *the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.*

As for the first, I need not insist upon it; for ye all know well enough what is meant by the things which are seen, they being always under your eye; such as money and goods, houses and lands, meat, drink, clothing, and the like. These things you yourselves see, or at least may see every day; these therefore, and the like, are the things which the apostle here means, when he saith, *We look not at the things which are seen.* He means them, not in themselves, as they are necessary to the support of human life; but as they are extravagantly coveted or abused to luxury and excess. So far as they are needful to our subsistence in this world, and to our serving God in it, so far the best of men may and ought to look after them.

But not so as to set their hearts upon them, and to be always craving more and more of them: not so as to aim at stately houses, large estates, delicious fare, gay clothing, or the like. They do not thus look at these things that are seen, nor indeed upon any thing at all that is so, upon nothing which they can see with their eyes, in comparison of the things which are not seen; that is, such things as are not the objects of our sight, nor come within the reach of any of our senses. So that they who look upon things only with

their bodily eyes, and regard nothing but what comes into their minds through some of their senses, can perceive no more of them, than if there were no such thing in the world: although there be doubtless many more things in the world which we never did see, than those we do. There are many great kingdoms upon earth, with a vast number of inhabitants of all sorts in them, which few if any of us ever saw, and yet none of us doubt but there are such, only because we have heard of them by some who have been there and seen them. In like manner, there are many things of another nature in the world, which we never did or can see with the eyes of our body, and yet have all the reason that can be to believe them, in that we have the infallible word and testimony of God himself for them; which is infinitely more than if all the creatures in the world should come and tell us of them. *And if we hear not Moses and the prophets, or God speaking by them, neither should we be persuaded though one rise from the dead,* to acquaint us with them, Luke xvi. 31 Neither are these things which we never saw, and yet have so much cause to believe, only very many, more than we can imagine; but they are the far greatest and noblest things that be, and most worthy to be looked at: as for example; *No man hath seen God at any time,* 1 John iv. 12. *He dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto, whom no man hath seen, or can see,* 1 Tim. vi. 16. insomuch, that although he be every where, we can see him no where. But as Job saith, *Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not: he passeth on also, but I perceive him not,* Job ix. 11. and the reason is, because God is a Spirit, without any matter or body, and therefore cannot possibly be the object of any of our senses, which can be affected with nothing but what is of their own nature, material or bodily. Neither is he only a Spirit, but of that infinite purity and perfection, that he is infinitely beyond the reach not only of our senses, but of our apprehensions too. Yet

nevertheless, though we cannot see him, we are as certain that he is, as that we ourselves are; for if he was not, we could not be; it being *in him that we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. And though he be perfectly out of our sight, yet he hath manifested himself sufficiently to us by the works which he hath done, and still doth continually. *For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead.* So that all who take no notice of him, are without excuse, Rom. i. 20. Especially now that he hath made known himself unto the world by his Son too. *For though no man hath seen God at any time, the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. He hath most clearly revealed all that is necessary or possible for mankind to know of God; and therefore all that believe in Christ, cannot but be always thinking upon God, though they cannot see him, as much as if they could. *I have set the Lord*, saith David, *always before me*, Psal. xvi. 8. Or, as St. Peter interprets it, *I foresaw the Lord before my face, for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved*, Acts ii. 25. So all that truly believe, see him that is invisible, as Moses did, Heb. xi. 27. They are always looking upon him, as looking always upon them, wheresoever they are; though they cannot see him, yet their eye is always upon him, the *eye of faith* in God's holy word, Heb. xi. 1. whereby they look at the things which are not seen. *Behold*, saith David, *as the eyes of servants look unto the hand of their masters, and as the eyes of a maiden to the hand of her mistress; so our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us*, Psal. cxxiii. 2.

So also for our blessed Saviour, when he was in our flesh upon earth, he was commonly seen, as other men are, for several years together; but he ceased to be so when he went up to heaven. It is true, St. Stephen

saw him afterwards standing on the right hand of God, but the heavens were first opened in a wonderful manner, to make way for that blessed sight, Acts vii. 56. He was seen also of St. Paul several years after, 1 Cor. xv. 8. but there was so much light and glory about him, that it struck St. Paul blind, and made him fall down upon the earth, Acts ix. 3, 4, 9. And so it would certainly do to us, if we should now see him; our eyes could not possibly bear the light of his glorious body, Phil. iii. 21. But we need not fear it, for he is now quite out of our sight, being exalted to the right hand of God in the highest heavens, where no mortal eye can reach him; though the glorified saints and angels see him, and enjoy him perpetually. As to us, he is one of those things that are not seen; yet howsoever, they who truly believe in him, cannot but be always looking upon him as their own Mediator and Advocate, with the eye of faith beholding him in the presence of God, there taking intercession for them; *whom, therefore, having not seen, they love; in whom, though now they see him not, yet believing, they rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8. Neither do they only thus look at him in heaven, but upon earth too, whensoever they meet together in his name; for he having said, that he is there *in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 20. they cannot but look upon him as always there, as he is most certainly here in the midst of us at this time, as certainly as we ourselves are here. Though other men do not see him, they who believe his word cannot but be looking at him, as observing what they do, and assisting them in the doing of it.

And so they do, as to the Holy Spirit too: though he works insensibly upon them, and they can neither see him, nor perceive how he doth it, yet finding by God's word, as well as their own experience, that it is he who keeps them from evil, and inclines them to that which is good, and enables them likewise to perform it, their eyes are always upon him wheresoever they

are, and whatsoever they are doing: as we see in David, *Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?* Psal. cxxxix. 7. In what place soever he was, he looked upon the Spirit of God as there; so do all that are born of the Spirit, John. iii. 8.

Besides this one glorious and almighty God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, there are many other things in the world, which neither are, nor can be seen as yet by us; for when he made the world, he made things invisible, as well as visible in it. What those things are we may learn from St. Paul, where, speaking of Christ, he saith, *By him were all things created that are in heaven, and that are in earth; visible and invisible; whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers*, Col. i. 16. Which great names must needs signify most glorious and powerful creatures; but they are all invisible to us; we know not so much as what they are, but only in general, that they have not flesh and bones as we have, but are of a spiritual nature, and of so great power, that all the kings and emperors, sultans and potentates upon earth joined together, could not stand before one of them; for we read that one of them in one night smote an hundred and fourscore and five thousand in the camp of the Assyrians, who before thought themselves invincible, 2 Kings xix. 35. But this was done by an invisible hand; they could not see him that smote them; neither do we understand how he did it; nor how these invisible creatures live together, nor what they do, any farther than God hath revealed it to us in his holy word.

But there we find that some of them *kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation* in which they were created, and are therefore *reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude, ver. 6. And that they, notwithstanding, still retain the same power, being still *principalities and powers, and the rulers of the darkness of this world*, Ephes. vi. 12. And also that they have some kind of government

among themselves; for one of them is called, *the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience*, chap. ii. 2. And he is properly the devil, the other his angels, Matt. xxv. 41. But all and every one also is called the devil and satan, the accuser and adversary of mankind, that *as a roaring lion walketh about, seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Pet. v. 8. But they always go in fetters and chains, and cannot step one step further than God gives them leave; but if he once let them loose upon a man, they immediately devour him; neither is there any man, but these wicked spirits some time or other set upon him; some they tempt to one sin, some to another, according as they find a man is inclined by his temper, his calling, his company, or other circumstances of his life. And when once they have got hold of a man, they never leave him until they have destroyed him, unless God, by his special grace, rescue him out of their hands. They infect him with heresy, or draw him into schism; they divert him by one trick or other from going to church, and using the means of grace; they hurry him from one ill company to another, and never suffer him to be at rest, or to have time so much as to think one serious thought; they lay snares and traps wheresoever he goes, that if he happen to escape one, he may be sure to be caught in another. Thus the poor man is haunted by those which he never sees, till he is got among them in the infernal pit.

But although this implacable enemy of mankind cannot be seen by any, yet they who truly believe the Gospel, have their eyes always upon him, so as to be aware of him. *They are not ignorant of his devices*, 2 Cor. ii. 11. and therefore *resist him, stedfast in the faith*, 1 Pet. v. 9. by which they are *able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked*, Eph. vi. 16.

There are others of these created spirits, called also angels, and archangels, which continue in their first estate, most pure and holy, waiting always upon the

almighty Creator of the world, and doing whatsoever he pleaseth in it. Some have thought that every man, or at least every good man, hath one of these always about him ready to succour and defend him; whether they be so or no, I shall not undertake to determine, but am sure, that *they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation*, Heb. i. 14. that God hath given them a charge over such, *to keep them in all their ways*, Psal. xvi. 11. and that they have accordingly done so all along, as we read both in the Old and New Testament. And having God's word for it, we cannot doubt but they do so still. And therefore, although we cannot see them, we cannot but look upon them as always with us, ready upon all occasions to protect us, and to convey all such blessings to us, as God is pleased of his infinite mercy to send us by their hands.

But that which gave the occasion of the apostle's speaking here of our looking at the *things that are not seen*, and which we therefore ought especially to consider, is the place where the holy angels, together with *the spirits of just men made perfect*, have their usual abode and residence, even heaven, where they live together in perfect light, and love, and peace, and joy, and health, and happiness, the greatest they are capable of; where they are always rejoicing, and singing, and praising God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne; where they see God face to face, as clearly as it is possible for creatures to do it; where they enjoy him and all his divine perfections to the full; where they have the light of his countenance always shining upon them, refreshing, overspreading, and filling them with all true joy and pleasure, as much as they are able to hold; where they converse with their ever-blessed Redeemer, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him; where they have all things they can possibly desire, and are fully assured they shall have them for ever.

This is a glorious place indeed; but it is quite out of

our sight, and beyond our very imagination too : for, as it is written, *Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath there prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. But though we cannot see them, we can look up towards them with longing desires, and firm hopes, through Christ, to be one day made partakers of them ; as we may in some measure be already by faith, as it is in the substance of things hoped for, as well as the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. At least, we can look at them as the great end we aim at in all our actions.

And so be sure all true Christians do ; whilst other men aim no higher than at the earth, and the trifles upon it, moiling and toiling all their life long only for a little money, or for a little applause among their fellow worms, or perhaps for such pleasures as the brutes enjoy. They who truly believe the Gospel aim higher, the highest that their eyes can reach, and beyond it too ; they look at the things that are not seen, they aim at heaven itself ; all their design is to get thither, and there to obtain the greatest riches, the highest honours, and those substantial pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore, that they may be made equal to the holy angels, and fellow-commoners with them in their celestial joys and honours. They labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that which endureth to everlasting life, John vi. 27. They seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness before all things else, Matt. vi. 33. They strive all they can to work out their salvation with fear and trembling, and to make their calling and election sure, Phil. ii. 12. 2 Pet. i. 10. They press towards the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 14. They, with Moses, have respect unto the recompence of reward, Heb. xi. 26. and so look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.

For the things which are seen are temporal ; but the

things which are not seen are eternal. This is the reason which the apostle here gives why they do so ; and it is such a reason, that whosoever duly considers it, must needs be persuaded by it to do so too ; for why should men look at such things as are only temporal, when at the same time things eternal lie before them, and may as soon be had, if not much sooner, than the other ? But all the things we see are only temporal, or of a short continuance : if they last so long, as they seldom do, they cannot possibly last any longer than this life, which at the longest is but short, and at the best uncertain : you are never certain by all your care and pains to attain any thing you fancy in this world ; if you have it, you are never certain to keep it so much as one moment. And if ye should happen to attain all ye do or can desire, and keep it for a while, ye must certainly leave it ere long, and perhaps to such as will never thank you for it, but spend it faster than you ever got it ; you yourselves be sure will have no benefit or comfort of it ; *for this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives, be as though they had none ; and they that weep, as though they wept not ; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not ; and they that buy, as though they possessed not ; and they that use this world, as not abusing it : for the fashion of this world passeth away,* 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31 All that we see in this world is in perpetual motion, and never continueth in one stay ; and it is not long but the whole fashion of it, and all things in it, will be dissolved, so as never to be any more : who then would set his heart, or fix his eyes upon those things which are seen, seeing ere long they will vanish out of sight, and be no more seen ?

Who would not rather look at the things which are not yet seen, considering that they are eternal, or last for ever ? The Almighty God, the chiefest good, in whose love and favour all our happiness consisteth, he was, and is, and is to come, from everlasting to everlast-

ing, God blessed for ever. Those invisible creatures, the holy angels, with whom we hope to live, though they had a beginning, they shall never have an end, but shall live for ever ; and so do all the saints of God that live with them. The place where they live is *a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. The *crown* that every one there wears is *incorruptible*, 1 Cor. ix. 25. And so is the inheritance they are there possessed of, *it is incorruptible, undefiled, and fadeth not away*, 1 Pet. i. 4. The pleasures they enjoy at God's right hand, as *for evermore*, Psal. xvi. 11. And the whole kingdom which they are there advanced to, as it was *prepared for them from the foundation of the world*, it shall continue to the dissolution of it, and beyond that too, when time shall be no more. So that all who once obtain the things that are not seen, are sure to enjoy them for ever ; and so live as happily as it is possible for creatures to live to all eternity. *For the wicked shall go into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into life eternal*, Matt. xxv. 46.

These things being considered, one would think it an easy matter to persuade people to look at the things which are not seen, and not at the things which are. But after all, I fear, it will be very difficult ; men's thoughts being generally so wholly taken up with what they see and converse with every day, that there is no room left for any thing else to enter ; so that we find, by sad experience, it is to little purpose to call upon them to look at things that seem a great way off, and out of their sight : they can make a shift, perhaps, to give us the hearing, but that is all ; as for doing what they hear, that they seldom or never trouble their heads about. Howsoever, hoping there may be some here present who really believe the word of God, and are accordingly concerned for their future state, how they may live in the other world as well as this, such I would advise to observe and practise what they have now heard, as the most effectual

means whereby to live happily both here and hereafter too.

For, first, by accustoming yourselves to look at the things which are not seen, you will learn by degrees to despise those that are, as not worthy to be compared, nor so much as named or thought of the same day, with the other : you will then *not love the world, nor the things which are in the world*, 1 John ii. 15.

For how can he love this world, whose eyes are always in the other, where he sees all things so infinitely above all things here below, that he cannot but think them as below him to look upon ? how can he love any thing upon earth, whose heart is in heaven, where he beholds glory, beauty, excellency itself in its highest perfection ? To such a one, all things that are seen, seem as they are, as nothing and vanity ; and therefore howsoever they fall out, it is all one to him ; he is never moved one way or other by them : he still looks upon God as his Father, upon Christ as his Advocate, upon the Holy Ghost as his Comforter, upon the glorified saints and angels as his fellow-citizens, and upon heaven as his inheritance. These are the things that take up his affections, and fill his soul with so much love, desire, and joy, that he cannot concern himself with the little trifles of this world, any further than to get well out of them, and to use them so as may be most for his interest in those great and glorious things which are not seen.

This is the way therefore to keep your spirits also from sinking under any trouble or difficulty you meet with here below ; for by looking at the things that are not seen, you will be so taken and enamoured with them, that you will think nothing too great to suffer, nothing too hard to do for the attainment of them : as we see in St. Paul, when it was told him by the Holy Ghost, that bonds and afflictions wait for him in every city ; *But none of these things, saith he, move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which*

I have received, Acts xx. 44. And when the brethren besought him with tears not to go up to Jerusalem, because of the troubles that would there befall him, he answered roundly, *What do ye mean to weep and to break my heart? for I am ready not to be bound only, but to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus*, Acts xxi. 13. This was the true Christian spirit indeed; but how came the apostle by it? by his looking at things not seen. *Our light afflictions*, saith he, *which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen.* His eye was at heaven, and therefore he was resolved that nothing upon earth should hinder him from going thither: in which he did but follow the example of his and our great Lord and Master, *looking unto Jesus, the Author and the Finisher of our faith, who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God*, Heb. xii. 2. Moreover, this is the way not only to withstand, but overcome the temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil; for they being all taken from things that are seen, he that looks only at the things that are not seen, can never be taken with them. He, *walking by faith, and not by sight*, 2 Cor. v. 7 lives out of their reach, and hath the power of God himself engaged to overcome and keep them under. *For this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith*, 1 John v. 4.

This is the way also to *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, and so in the narrow path that leads to life; for he that is always looking upon Almighty God as the Governor of the world, and of all things in it, cannot but make it his constant care and study in all things to obey and please him; and having the place he is going to always in his eye, will walk directly to it, whilst others ramble about, going they know not whither.

This is the way too, whereby we may go, when we

will, from earth to heaven, and see, as St. John did, what they are doing there ; how they worship and fall down before the eternal God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne. How Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, Moses and Elias, and all that ever lived and died in the truth, faith, and fear of God, how they employ and recreate themselves together ; how happily they live ; how cheerfully they look ; how pleasantly they sing their hallelujahs ; and how they join with the angels and arch-angels, in crying to one another, *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth is full of thy glory. Glory be to thee, O Lord, most high.* Thus all who rightly look at the things which are not seen, even while they are upon earth, *they have their conversation in heaven ; from whence also they look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ,* Phil. iii. 20.

This also is the way to *be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. They who, while they are in this world, look only at the things which are seen ; when they go into the other, if they should be admitted into heaven, they could know nobody there, nor what they are doing, having never seen any such thing before ; and so would be altogether unfit for that holy society, and incapable of their celestial joys : whereas they, who have accustomed themselves to look at the things which are not seen, when they go to heaven, neither the place, nor the company, nor the employment, will seem strange to them, for they have been used to it before, and had their eye all along upon it. And therefore they will no sooner come into that blessed assembly, but they will immediately strike up with them in singing forth the praises of the most high God.

Lastly, this is the way to use the means of grace, so as really to obtain grace by them. Neither can it be done any other way : he that looks only at the things which are seen, can never pray to any purpose ; for he doth not see him he prays to ; he cannot hear the word

of God as such, in that he doth not look upon him whose word it is. And in the sacrament of the Lord's supper, though he may eat the bread and drink the wine which he doth see, he cannot possibly receive the body and blood of Christ; for they are not seen: whereas, they who look at the things which are not seen, they find and feel wonderful life, and vigour, and efficacy in those holy institutions; all the while they are upon their knees, their eyes and their hearts are wholly upon God, to whom they pray, and upon their Advocate at his right hand, in whose name they do it; all the while they are singing psalms, or hymns, or spiritual songs, they join with all the invisible host of heaven, in praising and glorifying their almighty Creator, and most merciful Redeemer; all the while they are hearing the word of God read or expounded to them, though they see only a man speaking, they *receive it not as the word of man, but as it is in truth the word of God, which effectually worketh in them* who thus believe, 1 Thess. ii. 13. And when they are at our Lord's table, looking not at the bread and wine, or any thing else they see, but only at Christ whom they do not see, they verily and indeed receive his most blessed body and blood, to preserve both their souls and bodies to eternal life.

Wherefore, by our thus using the means of grace, we may grow, as in all other, so particularly in this grace, of looking always at the things which are not seen, which will excite and quicken all other graces in us, and put us upon the constant exercise of them; for if we go, as we ought, every day to the house of God, where we have nothing to do with any thing that is seen, but only with what is not seen, and accordingly look at the things which are not seen there, we shall learn by degrees to do so every where else too; and then we shall live like Christians indeed: for wheresoever we are, our thoughts would be always running upon God as present with us, and upon our Saviour as interceding for us; our hearts will be always in heaven, where our

treasure is ; and we shall never be easy in our minds but whilst we are doing something in order to our getting to it : that when we leave all these things which we now see, we may go to those which we do not yet see, but hope for, through the merits of the eternal Son of God : to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be glory for ever.

S E R M O N L X I I I

OF TRUST IN GOD.

PSALM. ix. 10.

And they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee ; for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.

AS all men desire to live happily in the world, there are none but may do so if they will, notwithstanding all the crosses and troubles they meet with in it ; for our happiness doth not depend upon any thing without us, but is seated wholly in our own breasts, where nobody can deprive us of it, unless we ourselves consent. If all be right there, and we continue stedfastly resolved to keep it so, nothing that falls out will be able to discompose or move us. Though storms and tempests should arise and beat upon us, we shall still be serene and calm within : and so as happy as we can expect to be in this mortal and imperfect state.

But this happy temper of mind there are but few attain to in this life, nor any without great study and application ; for it is not to be gotten from any thing, or all things upon earth, but must be fetched from heaven, if we ever have it ; for we find by our own experience, that our souls are of that nature, that nothing which God hath made can satisfy or terminate our desires ; but how much soever we have, our desires still run on and on, *ad infinitum*, and so can never rest till

they come to an infinite good ; such as none is but God. But he is such an infinite good, that in him we have all, and more than we can possibly desire. And therefore if our souls be once fixed on him, there they rest as in their proper centre, though all things else that are about us be in perpetual motion.

This our reason itself, assisted by divine revelation, (without which it is but a blind guide,) may easily direct us to ; as I doubt not but some here present have already found. Howsoever, it being a subject wherein we are all so nearly concerned, they who are so wise as to mind their own real interest, cannot but take all occasions to exercise their thoughts upon it. And it will be very reasonable to do it now : for which purpose therefore I have chosen these words, where the royal prophet having been speaking of God's supreme authority over the world, and of the righteous judgment which he executeth in it, he on a sudden turns his discourse, and applies himself immediately to him, saying, *And they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee : for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.*

Where we may observe, first, the qualifications requisite to the fixing our minds upon God, even the knowledge of his name : then the necessary tendency of such a qualification, *they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee.* And, lastly, the reason of it, *for thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee.* For the truth of all which he appeals to God himself, the God of truth, directing what he saith to him, the better to confirm us in the belief of it.

First therefore, it is here supposed, that although it be easy to talk of trusting in God, there are but few that do it ; none but they who know his name ; but all such will certainly do it. And to understand who they are that are thus qualified for it, we must consider what is here meant by his name ; and what by knowing it ; neither of which questions can be truly resolved any other way than from the holy Scriptures ; forasmuch as

we can have no right knowledge of God, not so much as to know what it is to know him, but from the revelations that he hath there made of himself to us ; as appears but too plainly from all those who never had the holy Scriptures made known to them ; though they might perhaps have some general notions and traditions among them about that invisible Being which we call God, and they by some name or other in their respective languages ; yet they were so weak, imperfect, and confused, that they could not be properly said to know any thing at all of him, neither what he is, nor what he doth in the world. The old Greeks and Romans, I confess, before our Saviour's birth, spoke and wrote a little more refinedly of him ; but it was after the Israelites or Jews had been a long time dispersed among them, and had given them some hints of what was revealed to them, which the others endeavoured to improve as well as they could, but to little or no purpose, notwithstanding all their art and learning. Before that time, we do not find that either they or any other had any knowledge of the true God ; nor could have any but from himself, who therefore was pleased to reveal and make himself known, first to his own people, and by them to others ; which he need not have done, if he could have been known as well without it.

But now we are fully assured how the knowledge of God came into the world. It was first sent, and then brought into it by his Son ; who therefore saith, *No man knoweth the Son but the Father ; neither knoweth any man the Father, but the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him*, Matt. xi. 27. And, *No man hath seen God at any time ; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him*, John i. 18. He hath declared or revealed him all along from the beginning of the world by his Spirit in the prophets, 1 Pet. i. 11. Who therefore *spoke as they were moved by the Holy Ghost*, 2 Pet. i. 21. Thus *all Scripture is given by inspiration of God*, 2 Tim. iii. 16. And there it is that he hath re-

vealed himself, and whatsoever is necessary for us to know concerning his holy name.

In these holy writings, therefore, we find the word *name* used for person, as the name of God, for God himself. But in reference to him, there seems to be a particular reason for it, even because it is by his name that he hath manifested himself, and signified his pleasure how he would have us to think of him. When Moses desired to know his name, he said, *I AM THAT I AM*. And thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I AM* hath sent me unto you, Exod. iii. 14. He doth not say, *I AM* this or that, but *I AM* in general, and *I AM* what *I AM*, or I will be what I will be. Thus he calls himself, when he speaks of himself in the first person; but when we speak of him, he would have all us call him by a name of the same root and sense, in the third person, *Jehovah*, He is. We, following the Greek, translate it, *THE LORD*, in great letters; and wheresoever it is so written, the original word is *Jehovah*. This he calls his own name, Isa. xlii. 1 and it is his alone, Psal. lxxxiii. 18. It is proper and peculiar to him; so that nothing ever was, or can be truly called so, but he. But he is called by it all along in the Old Testament, after he had finished the creation, and so caused all things to be, though not before. Particularly in my text, the word which we translate *LORD*, in the original is *JEHOVAH*.

This therefore being the great name whereby it hath pleased the almighty Creator of the world to make himself known to mankind, by considering the proper signification of this name, together with what he hath elsewhere said of himself in holy writ for the clearer explication of it to us, we may truly know him, or, as it is here expressed, *his name*, so as to be able to form as high and clear perceptions of him in our minds, as our present state is capable of; for hereby we are given to understand, that he is not any limited or particular being,

as all other things are; but that he simply is essence or being itself in general, beyond which it is impossible for any thought to reach. That he therefore existeth in and of himself, and gives both essence and existence to all and every thing else that is. That *he was, and is, and is to come*, as St. John interprets his great name in respect of us, Rev. i. 4. But in himself, he always is from everlasting to everlasting the same, without any variableness, or shadow of change. That he is not compounded of several parts, powers, properties, or perfections; but absolutely is one pure, simple, undivided, invisible Being. That all the perfections or properties therefore which are attributed to him, as wisdom, power, goodness, &c. as they are in him, are neither distinguished from one another, nor from him in whom they are said to be, but only in our finite apprehensions of one and the same infinite perfection. That the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, *these three are one*, 1 John v. 7 that is, as he himself elsewhere saith, one Jehovah, one essence or substance; or, as we render it, one Lord, Deut. vi. 4. That *it is in him we live, and move, and have our being*, Acts xvii. 28. That whatsoever lives, lives in him; whatsoever moves, moves in him; and whatsoever is, is or subsists in him. That he is therefore every where, knows every thing, and doth whatsoever he will, only by willing it should be done. That as he thus made the world only by speaking, or expressing his will that it should be, so he continues to preserve and govern all and every thing that is in it. That not so much as a sparrow can fall to the ground without him, but the very hairs of our heads, and all the minutest things that are, as they are in him, so they are numbered and ordered by him. That he is therefore the Lord of sabaoth, the Being of beings, the Cause of all causes, that reigneth over the whole world, Psal. xxiii. 3. cxvii. 1. And *doth whatsoever he pleaseth in heaven and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places*, Psal. cxxxv. 6.

All this we are certain is true of Almighty God ; for we have it from himself, who only knows himself, and hath been pleased thus to reveal himself to us, that we may know him. But we must not think that all, who barely know what he hath thus said of himself, are in the number of those who are here said to know his name ; for a man may know all this to be true, so as to have high speculations of God, and be able to discourse with great elegancy, as well as propriety of speech concerning him, and yet not have any right knowledge of him ; for that is not like the knowledge of other things, which swims only in the brain, but sinks down into the heart, and overspreads it with a quick sense of his divine glory and goodness, which none are qualified for, but they whose hearts are cleansed from all impure and corrupt affections, according to that of our blessed Saviour, *Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God*, Matt. v. 8. Of all other, that of the prophet is verified, that, *by hearing they shall hear, and shall not understand ; and seeing they shall see, and shall not perceive ; because their hearts are waxed gross*, and so not capable of being affected with what they hear and know, Isaiah vi. 9. Matt. xii. 14. Whereas they whose hearts are pure and holy, and so in some measure according to their capacities like to him, they understand what is said of God, so as to be touched to the quick with it. They feel his power, they taste his goodness, and see his glory shining in themselves. Their whole souls are possessed with such a sight and sense of him, that they are all in a flame with love to him, and wholly inclined to serve, honour, and obey him in all that he commands.

Especially they who thus *know his name*, will put *their trust in him*, as he himself here saith by his royal prophet. They will put their trust in him ; that is, they will not fear any creature in the world, nor any thing that may happen in it ; but keeping their hearts always fixed upon the Lord, the Almighty God, as governing

the world, and disposing of all things in it, they rest, as the word signifies, safe and secure in him, not doubting, but firmly believing, that he will preserve them from evil, and do that which is really the best for them. *In God have I put my trust*, saith David; *I will not be afraid what man can do unto me*, Psal. lvi. 11. And *a good man*, saith he, *shall not be afraid of evil tidings. His heart is fixed, trusting in the Lord*, Psal. cxii. 7

But they who truly know Almighty God their Maker, being conscious likewise to themselves that they have offended him, by not observing the laws, nor doing the work he sent them into the world about, for the setting forth his glory in it, and so not answering his end in making them, how can they ever hope for any favour from him? They have rather just cause every moment to fear that he will dash them to pieces, as a potter doth a vessel that will not serve to the use for which he made it. It is true, they have so, if they look upon him as their Maker.

But they who know his name, according to the revelations that he hath given us, they know, that *he so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. That *in the fulness of time, this his only Son* was for that purpose *born of a woman, and so was made flesh*, or took upon him the form or nature of man, by the same inconceivable power whereby he had before made the worlds. That being thus made man, he as such died for the sins or offences of mankind, so as to *be a propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. and therefore for all, from the beginning to the end of it. That as *he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification*, Rom. iv. 25. And for that end went up to heaven, where he hath been ever since, and is now in our nature, continually appearing in the presence of God, as our Mediator and Advocate, making intercession for all that ever did, or shall believe in him,

and accordingly apply themselves unto him for it. And that for his sake therefore, and upon his mediation, grounded upon the infinite merits of his death, it hath pleased God to promise his grace and favour again to mankind in all ages, together with all sorts of blessings that are any way needful to make them holy and happy for ever.

Now they who know the name of God, knowing and believing all this to be true upon his word, as they cannot but repent that they have ever offended him ; so, notwithstanding their offences, they cannot but put their trust in him, forasmuch as they have his own word and promise for it, that he will receive them into his grace and favour ; especially knowing and considering withal, that the death which his Son suffered for their offences, and in their stead, was of much greater worth and value in his sight, and so more satisfactory to him, than all theirs could ever have been ; for theirs altogether could have been no more than the death of so many finite persons ; whereas his was the death of a person that is infinite. Whereby also he hath brought more glory to God, than all mankind could ever have done, if they had continued in their first state, and had always done the work which he for that purpose had set them. Because hereby two of his all-glorious perfections shine forth most gloriously in the world, which otherwise could never have been seen ; even his grace and his truth : *for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17 His infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, were manifested in his creation of the world, and in his creatures observing the laws which he hath prescribed to them. But his grace and truth appear only in his redemption of man by Jesus Christ.

But in that they both appear most illustriously. His grace, in the gracious promises he hath made ; and his truth, in his faithful performance of them. And that is the reason wherefore the Gospel so frequently and so

strictly requires us to believe in Christ, or, as it is expressed in the Old Testament, to trust in God, as ever we hope to be saved; because otherwise we call his truth into question, we make God a liar, and so deny him the glory which is due unto his name for it.

But how diffident soever other people may be, be sure they who know his name, as it was proclaimed by himself, saying, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth*, Exod. xxxiv. 6. they must needs believe whatsoever he hath said or promised, and accordingly trust on him; otherwise they would act contrary to their own knowledge. And if any fears or doubts happen to arise in their minds, from the remembrance of their former sins, or present infirmities, they knowing who is the Mediator between God and them, *even the man Christ Jesus*, they lift up their hearts to him, as standing at the right hand of God, and there making atonement and reconciliation for them, by virtue of that great propitiatory sacrifice which he once offered for them, by dying in their stead; by which means, they live with a constant dependence and trust on God, in the midst of all the changes and chances of this mortal life. *Though they walk in darkness, and have no light, they trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon their God*, Isa. l. 10. They *rest* themselves, as the word may be rendered, upon him, not as he is their Maker only, but as he is their Saviour and their God; and therefore can never be moved, being supported by the same almighty hand, which upholds the whole world, and ordereth all things in it.

There is still another reason to be given, why they, who know the name of the Lord, *will put their trust in him*; that which the psalmist here gives, by the direction of God himself, saying, *For thou, Lord, hast never failed them that seek thee*. If he never did fail them that seek him, we may be confident he never will; he being Jehovah, *the Lord that changeth not*, Mal. iii. 6.

But that he never did, is here affirmed by God himself, and hath been found true, by the constant experience of all that ever sought him. And therefore they who know his name, must needs put their trust in him, as being fully assured that he will never fail them when they seek him ; as they be sure always do.

But for our better understanding this, it will be necessary to consider, what is here meant by seeking the Lord ; and then in what sense it is here said, that he never failed them that do so.

As for the first, we may observe, that when it pleased the eternal God to make the world, and, among other creatures, mankind upon earth, he made nothing to make them happy, intending himself alone, and his own perfections, should be the object of man's felicity, as well as of the holy angels ; and for that purpose, having made them capable of enjoying his divine goodness, he actually stated them in it, so as that they might enjoy as much as they could hold of it, and so be as happy as it was possible for them to be. And when we by our unhappy fall had lost this our interest in him, he, through the mediation of his only-begotten Son, was graciously pleased to restore us to a capacity of regaining it, and to put us into such a way for it, that none of us can miss of it, but by our own default, which they who know his name, being fully assured of upon his own word, and having their eyes opened to see where the real interest lies, and how they may recover it, cannot but earnestly desire to be reinstated in him, the chiefest good, that they may have him again to be their God, and so may live under his immediate care and protection, in his special love and favour, and under the light of his countenance shining upon them. This they desire, not as they do other things, but above all things in the world besides. As we see in David, saying, *Whom have I in heaven but thee ? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee*, Psalm lxxiii. 24.

Now this holy desire being thus kindled, as it always

is, in the hearts of those who know God, it excites and puts them upon doing all they can to recover their interest in him, that they may have his wisdom again to direct them, his power to defend them, his grace and Holy Spirit to sanctify and govern both their souls and bodies, and his blessing upon all they have or do. And this is that which in his holy oracles is called, *seeking the Lord*. *Seeking his face or favour*, Hos. v. 15. Psal. cv. 4. *Seeking him with all their hearts, and with all their souls*, Deut. iv. 29. 2 Chron. xv. 12. *And with their whole desire*, ver. 15. *Diligently*, Heb. xi. 6. This is to seek the Lord indeed, when our hearts are wholly set upon him, our desires carried after him, and our hopes are placed in him, so that we expect nothing but from him, and therefore use all possible means to reconcile ourselves to him, that we may receive from him, who alone can give us whatsoever we desire, expect, or hope for.

But they who thus seek the Lord God omnipotent, so as to find him gracious and merciful to them, must first leave their sins, and turn to him. According to that of the prophet, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon*, Isaiah lv. 6, 7. And, *Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Turn ye unto me, saith the Lord of hosts, and I will turn unto you, saith the Lord of hosts*, Zech. i. 3.

For this purpose, therefore, they must search into their hearts, and look back upon their lives, and consider wherein they have transgressed his righteous laws, and resolve by his assistance to do so no more. They must avoid whatsoever is offensive to his Divine majesty, or dishonourable to his glorious name, for that only reason, because it is so. They must abstain from all appearance of evil, as well as from that which plainly

appears to be so, for fear of incurring his displeasure. They must set themselves in good earnest upon the work he sent them into the world about, even to serve and glorify him that sent them hither. They must walk with Zacharias and Elizabeth, *in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless*, Luke i. 6. They must love him with all their hearts ; and *whether they eat or drink, or whatsoever they do, they must do all to the glory of God*, 1 Cor. x. 31 In short, they must always do those things that please him, John viii. 29. Which that they may, *whatsoever they do in word or deed, they must do all in the name of our Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him*, Col. iii. 17

For after all, *he only is the way, the truth, and the life ; no man cometh to the Father, but by him*, John xiv 6. But *he is able to save to the utmost them that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25. For them, though not for others, he is always appearing in the presence of God, and interceding with him to accept of them, and of what they do, upon the account of what he himself hath done and suffered for them. By which means, all the good works they do, although they come short of what the law requires, yet they are pleasing and acceptable to God through Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. ii. 5. Who being made a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, all who thus seek God by him, are sure to find him propitious to them : so perfectly reconciled, as to take them into his own particular care, and to give them all things necessary both for life and godliness.

They who have thus prepared themselves to seek the Lord, can never seek him in vain ; for he is always at hand, ready to assist, protect, and supply them with whatsoever they want, upon their applying themselves to him for it, by prayer and supplication, or petition, which in the holy language is usually expressed by *seek*

ing, Esther v. 3, 7 vii. 3. Ezra vii. 6. Thus *Daniel set his face unto the Lord God, to seek by prayer and supplication*, Dan. ix. 4. And when the people had occasion and an heart to seek the Lord, they went up to the temple at Jerusalem to pray unto him there, 2 Chron. xi. 16. xx. 4. as they had done before at the tabernacle ; for it is said, that when Moses had set it up, *every one which sought the Lord, went out unto the tabernacle of the congregation which was without the camp*, Exod. xxxiii. 7. They went thither to seek the Lord, by offering up their prayers, together with their sacrifices, to him residing there, and presentiating himself in a peculiar manner, from between the wings of the cherubim over the mercy-seat or throne of grace. This way of meeting with Almighty God, and seeking him upon any occasion, continued all along not only in the tabernacle, but temple too, where the ark, with the mercy-seat over it, was set in the most holy place, so called because that was there.

We have no such way now ; but we have one which in all respects is as good, and in some better ; for he doth not manifest his special presence now in any one particular place only, as he did then ; but in all places where any that know his name, meet together in it ; we may be confident of it ; for we have it from his own mouth, saying, *Again I say unto you, that if two of you shall agree on earth, as touching any thing which they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them*, Matt. xviii. 19, 20. Where we may take notice, that this promise is made only to public congregations or assemblies of his people met together in his name, and to such only as agree together beforehand what to ask of him : and therefore not to those where the people know not what the minister will ask, nor perhaps he himself, until he hath asked it. But to such as this, where we all knew before, and agreed that such and

such things should be prayed for, we have his own word for it, that what we have thus agreed to ask, shall be granted us : and so we have too, that he is here in the midst of us ; for if he be so where but two or three, the least number that can be, much more where so many are gathered together in his name, as we now are : and therefore may and ought to be as certain that he is now in the midst of us, as that we ourselves are here ; and that we may seek him by prayer and supplication in this place, as effectually as his ancient people did before the mercy-seat. *Let us therefore, as the apostle speaks, come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need,* Heb. iv. 16.

But that we may be sure to find the favour we seek God for, there are three things especially to be observed. First, that we ask it only in the name of his Son Jesus Christ ; for we have no ground to expect any thing from him but what he hath promised to us, and according as he hath promised it : but he hath no where promised to give us what we ask in any other name, but only in the name of Christ ; for so runs the promise, *If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it,* John xiv. 14. and, *Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,* chap. xvi. 24. It must still be in his name ; *for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved,* Acts iv. 12. nor whereby we can receive any mercy at the hands of God ; *for the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ,* John i. 17. It was merited for us only by his death, and is conferred upon us only by his mediation. Hence it is, that his faithful people under the law offered up their daily prayers while the sacrifice and incense were burning upon their respective altars, typifying his death and intercession ; which was in effect praying in his name, as Daniel expressly did, when he prayed to God to hear him, for the *Lord's sake,* Dan.

ii. 17 which would be no other but the Lord Christ. And therefore, when our Lord saith to his disciples, *Hitherto ye have asked nothing in my name*, John xvi. 24. it is not to be so understood, as if they had not before prayed in the name of Christ, as the promised Messiah; but they have not yet prayed in the name of Jesus, in his name, as he was the Christ that was promised, which we must now do, as ever we desire to be heard. In all the prayers that we make to the almighty Creator and Governor of the world, we must look up to Jesus, the only Mediator between him and us, desiring nothing but in his name, for his sake, and upon the account of his death, whereby he purchased all manner of blessings and favours for us. Otherwise, we have no reason to think that he would hear such sinful creatures as we are; whereas if we do that, we have his own word for it, that we shall have whatsoever we ask.

But then, in the next place, we must not expect that God should give us what we ask, immediately from himself, or by altering the course of nature, but in the use of such ordinary means as he hath appointed for it: as if we pray that his grace may be always sufficient for us, we must exercise ourselves continually in those which we call the means of grace. If we want and desire the necessities of this life from him, we must follow some such particular callings or employment, which by his blessing may procure them for us. If we be in any great difficulty or trouble, and pray to be delivered from it, we must do what we lawfully can ourselves for it; I say, lawfully; for he that takes an unlawful course to get out of any trouble, will but sink himself deeper into it; if he doth not fall into a greater; as it often happens. Be sure it is impossible to get good by doing ill; we may flatter ourselves at present with the thoughts of it, but we shall soon see our mistake, especially if we pretend to seek help of God, and yet go out of his way to find it: this is not seeking, but provoking God: it is not praying, but mocking him: which he will never

endure, but avenge most severely one time or other. But if we ask any thing sincerely, earnestly, and incessantly of God, in the name of Christ, and use all such means, and such only, as are agreeable to his revealed will for it, we need not, or rather we ought not to doubt, but that he will give it us at such time, and so far as he sees it to be good for us.

For that is the last thing to be observed in all our prayers, that we trust in God for the answer of them. Though we must use the means, we must use them only as means, not depending at all upon them, but only upon him, who alone can make them effectual ; but we must trust on him with all our hearts, Prov. iii. 5. And for that purpose must lay aside that mischievous custom which is crept in I know not how among all sorts of Christians, of putting up many prayers to God, without ever minding afterwards whether he answer them or no : for that is the way never to have them answered indeed. But we, when we have directed our prayers to God, must look up, as David did, Psalm v. 3. expecting the blessing we prayed for, according to his promise : for he having promised to give us what we ask in his Son's name, unless we do him so much right as to take his word, and believe that he will make it good, we lose our interest in his promise, and make ourselves incapable of having it performed to us. Therefore our Lord makes this a necessary condition in all our prayers, saying, *All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive*, Matt. xxi. 22. And, *therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them*, Mark xi. 24. Which being the words of him, by whom alone our prayers are heard, we cannot from thence conclude, that as ever we expect that our prayers should be heard by him, we must always pray in faith, *nothing* wavering or doubting, Jam. i. 6. but firmly believing that God, according to his word, will give us what we ask in his name, if it be

really good for us. And that if he doth not give it us, it is because he knows it is better for us to be without it than to have it ; which if we had known as well as he, we should not have prayed him to give us it, but rather not to give us it. And so he answers our prayers in general, by not giving us that particular thing we prayed for ; but in that case too, if we continue instant in prayer, according to his will, he never fails to give us something that is better for us in lieu of it.

For he never fails them that seek him. This is the reason which he himself, by his prophet David, here gives, why they who know his name put their trust in him ; and therefore it must needs hold good, as God himself is true and *cannot lie*, Tit. i. 2. For he having made so many promises to all those who diligently seek him, he hath engaged his truth for the performance of them. His truth, that divine perfection that is so particularly celebrated all the Bible over ; where there is nothing more frequently spoken of than his mercy and his truth ; his mercy in making, and his truth in fulfilling his promises to us. And all, that we might have the firmest ground that can be to believe and trust in him. Which therefore also is made the great duty, upon which all our hopes and expectations from him depend, both for this life and the next. Insomuch, that according as our trust is in him, so is his mercy to us, Psalm xxiii. 22. And he doth not only save them who trust on him, but he therefore saves them because they do so, Psalm xxxvii. 40. Jer. xxxix. 18. Well then might the Psalmist say, *Blessed are all they that put their trust in him*, Psalm ii. 12.

Thus blessed are all they who know his name ; they constantly put their trust in him, and as constantly find, that he never fails them who thus seek him. He never fails to give them the blessing they seek him for, and more, yea, all they can desire ; we may be confident of it, for we have his own word, and the constant experience of all his faithful people for it, *I sought the*

Lord, saith David, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fear, Psalm xxxiv. 4. We have sought the Lord our God, saith king Asa, we have sought him, and he hath given us rest on every side, 2 Chron. xiv. 7 The same might be said of all that ever sought him aright; they always found him true and faithful to his word, gracious and liberal to them beyond either their deserts or desires, always making all things work together for their good, and sometimes altering the very course of secondary causes for it; as we find it recorded in the holy Scriptures. So happy are all they who seek him with all their hearts, and live with a stedfast dependence upon him; whatsoever other people may imagine; such, I mean, as either do not know him, or else do not seek him as they ought.

Now from these things thus plainly delivered, we may first observe, how necessary it is for all men to be fully instructed in the knowledge of the true God, the Maker of the world, and Saviour of mankind; for it is their ignorance of him that makes them slight his promises, as well as transgress his laws. Did we all but know God according as he hath manifested himself unto us, as we should never dare to offend him, we should put our whole trust and confidence in him, so as to fear nothing in the world but offending him, 2 Chron. xvii. 9.

From hence we may also learn, how much it concerns us to beware of those who bring in damnable heresies, *denying the Lord that bought them*, and him that made them too, so as not to own him any further than their own natural reason and philosophy, that is, their pride and conceit, seems to represent him to them. To such, all that I have now said will seem groundless and insipid, or at the best, like their natural philosophy, mere guess and conjecture, although it be taken out of God's own word; yea, for that very reason, because it is so. These can never know God aright, and then it is no wonder they neither love him, nor fear him, nor

serve him, nor worship him, nor believe nor trust in him, as they ought ; but after all their fine talk and fair pretences, live as without God in the world. But although they will not seek him, it is not long but they will find there is a God that judgeth the world.

None here present can take this as spoken of themselves. For your presence here commands me in charity to believe that you all desire to seek God, and came hither for that very end ; that being the only end of our meeting together at this time and place. And I heartily wish we could all for the future take all occasions we can get of doing it ; and of doing it so, as he himself hath prescribed in his holy word. We should then experience the truth of what we have now heard, even, that he never fails them who seek him : and how happily should we then live in the midst of this troublesome and naughty world ? Whilst others are tossed to and fro, as in a tempestuous ocean, our hearts will be always fixed, trusting in the Lord. When his judgments are in the world, we need not fear ; for the Lord of hosts is with us, the God of Jacob is our refuge. For he that governs the world hath promised to take care of them that seek him. And therefore whatsoever happens, they may rest fully satisfied in their minds that no real evil shall befall them, nothing but what some way or other shall do them good. And although they cannot alway see it here, they shall hereafter. When he shall unveil himself, and lay open his wonderful works before them, that they may see how, by the power of his word, all things concurred to the setting forth his glory, in fulfilling the promises he hath made. Then we shall clearly see what infinite cause we have to admire and praise his infinite love, and goodness, and truth, and mercy to us in Jesus Christ, that Lamb of God which was once slain to take away the sins of the world, and, by virtue of the blood which he then shed, is now and always making atonement and intercession for all that come unto God by him. And then we shall

join with angels, and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, in singing forth the praises of the most high God, according as St. John heard them, saying, *Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen, Amen.*

S E R M O N L X I V .

THE NATURE AND NECESSITY OF RESTITUTION.

LUKE xix. 8.

And Zaccheus stood, and said unto the Lord, Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor ; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.

REPENTANCE being so absolutely necessary to salvation, that no man can be saved without it, it hath pleased God in his holy word not only to call upon us, and command us to repent ; but he hath given us likewise several examples of it, that so understanding how the saints of old set upon this great work, we may the better know how to do it too. But one of the most remarkable instances that we have of this kind, either in the Old or New Testament, is that of Zaccheus, who having lived many years in a great and notorious sin, and coming afterwards upon the sight of Christ to a sight and sense of his sin too, he immediately became so true a penitent, so sincere a convert, that his example is left upon record, for all generations to know and imitate.

To understand the story aright, it will be necessary to consider the several circumstances of it. For which we must know, that in the several countries and places belonging to the Roman emperor, he had a certain toll, tribute, or custom paid him, which was let out at a certain rate to some that lived thereabouts, which were

therefore called τελῶναι, the farmers or purchasers of the customs, as the word signifies. *Omnes qui quid a fisco conducunt, recte appellantur Publicani.* Ulstian.

These employed others under them to collect the customs, who were therefore called by the Romans, *Portitores*, because they went to the ports and other places to gather and receive them, and then to bring them to the farmers, which used to sit at a place appointed for the receipt of them, therefore called τελώνιον, *the receipt of custom*, where our Lord found St. Matthew sitting, when he called him to him, Matt. ix. 9. Now they who thus farmed the customs, or any public revenues, were therefore called *Publicani* by the Romans. As we learn from Ulstian, the old Roman lawyer, and the famous civilian. *Publicani dicuntur, qui publica vectigalia habent conducta*, lib. 12, &c. *de Publicanis.* They, saith he, are called publicans, who have the public revenues farmed out to them. Which I therefore mention, that ye may know who or what these publicans were, which you read of so in the New Testament; for they were not, as they are commonly thought to be, such as gathered the customs themselves, but such as hired them at a certain rate, which they paid yearly into the exchequer, or by order from thence. And usually many joined together in taking all the public revenues in such a place, and are therefore in the civil law called *Socii vectigalium*, the partners or companions of the customs, which they managed either jointly or separately, as they could agree among themselves. And that is the reason that you often meet with many of them together, as Matt. ix. 10. Luke iii. 12. xv. 1. but they that managed the business jointly, or in common, were usually together.

Sometimes one man might take all the customs that should grow due in such a place, especially if the place was but small, and he could give such security as the public liked of; and he would either take care of the whole himself, or else let either all or some part to others

under him, and therefore was called Ἀρχιτελώνης, chief among the publicans ; such a one there was at Jericho, called Zaccheus, and he was *rich*, as it is here said, ver. 2. And he must needs be rich, who could farm so considerable a part of the public revenues, and give such security as would be required of him in that case.

Now this rich publican, having heard much of the fame of Jesus, and understanding that he was to pass through Jericho, in his way to Jerusalem, he had a great mind to see him ; but being a man of a low stature, he could not possibly set his eyes upon him, by reason of the crowd that was about him ; and therefore *he ran before, and got up into a sycamore-tree* that was in the way. *When Jesus was come to the place, he looked up and saw him, and said to him, Zaccheus, make haste and come down, for to-day I must abide at thy house*, ver. 5. The man could not but be very much surprised to hear one, whom he had never seen before, calling him by his name, and inviting himself to his house, as if he had been an old acquaintance, especially seeing he did not only desire, but bid him come down, and that quickly ; from whence he could not but think there was something more than ordinary in it ; and so certainly there was : for though he had never seen Jesus, Jesus had seen him before he was got into the *sycamore*, as he had seen Nathaniel when he was under the *fig-tree*, John i. 48. Even by his all-seeing eye, from which nothing could be hid, and by which he knew his very heart too, how desirous he was to see him in the way, and what he would do at home, better than he himself knew it : for it is more than probable that he had no thoughts as yet of saying, or doing, what he afterwards did.

Christ had no sooner spoken to Zaccheus to make haste and come down, but he presently obeyed : for *he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully*, ver. 6. Where we may observe by the way, how punctually he observed Christ's command, and hearkened to

his call : Christ bid him come down, and he came down ; Christ bid him make haste, and he did make haste to do it ; Christ told him, that he must go to his house, and he did not only receive him, but did it joyfully ; and all this in a matter which might seem very indifferent. Howsoever, Zaccheus made no scruple of that ; he had Christ's command, and that was enough for him, for he presently and cheerfully obeyed it : and so hath set all Christians an example what to do in the like case ; what Christ commands us to do, we must not dispute about it, but do it in obedience to his command, and we shall soon find the happy effect of it, as Zaccheus did.

But behold the malice and wickedness of men, even of those also who had the happiness to converse with Christ himself ! for Zaccheus had no sooner received this divine guest into his house, but they who came along with him, instead of commending Christ, for condescending so far as to go into Zaccheus's house, and Zaccheus for his entertainment of Christ, they presently fall a railing at both ; at Zaccheus, for having been a great sinner ; and at Christ himself, for accepting of an entertainment from him : for it is said, *when they saw it, they all murmured, saying, That he was gone to be a guest with a man that is a sinner*, ver. 7 For the Jews looked upon all publicans as great sinners, not only because they usually exacted more than their due, but because they were publicans to the heathen emperors, and farmed their revenues ; which they, esteeming themselves the only people of God, were mightily offended at, insomuch that they would never come near them, nor have any conversation with them ; and if any one offered to sit down and eat with them, they were presently scandalized at it, and therefore murmured against Christ himself and his disciples for doing it, not only at this, but any other time, as Luke v. 30.

But see here the wisdom and power of God, in bringing good out of evil. Zaccheus hearing himself called

a sinner, and Christ upbraided for only coming into his house, was presently pricked in the heart, and called his sins to remembrance, and was struck with so quick a sense of them, with so great a sorrow for them, and with so strong an aversion to them, and resolution against them for the future, that he was not able to bear it any longer, nor so much as to keep it in; but up he gets, and in the midst of them all addresseth himself to our Lord in this humble and penitent manner, saying, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold.* As if he had said, I perceive, Lord, that the people who attend thee, are very much offended at thy coming into my house, who am a sinner. I confess I am so, a very great sinner: but I beseech thee not to disdain to stay a little with me, and to be my guest upon that account; for whatsoever sins I have hitherto committed, I now heartily repent of them, and resolve and promise before thee and them, that I will never commit them any more. And to testify my sincerity herein, behold, Lord, I will now relieve the poor as much as ever I oppressed them; for I will give them half my goods; and whatsoever I have wronged any man of, I will not only restore it to him again, but I will give him four times the value of it.

Our Lord, having heard this ingenuous confession and holy vow made by the publican, presently cries out, *This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he also is the son of Abraham,* ver 9. As if he had said, I see that this man is now truly penitent for his sins, and so is this day come into a state of salvation, that salvation which I am come to procure for mankind; it is this day come home to him, and, by his means, to his whole house, forasmuch as he also is of the seed of Abraham, to whom the promises of my Gospel do peculiarly belong. And although he hath hitherto been a sinner, yet that shall not hinder his obtaining salvation by me; for I *the Son of man am come to seek and save*

that which was lost, ver. 10. that is, I am come into the world on purpose to seek such sinners as he hath been, and to save them from their sins ; for, *I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance*, Matt. ix. 12. He hath been a sinner, I have called him to repentance ; he hath accordingly repented, and therefore he shall be saved.

How did Zaccheus rejoice to hear these gracious words from Christ's own mouth ? How happy should we think ourselves, or rather, how happy should we be, if the Saviour of the world should say the same of us, and of every one of our houses, that this day is salvation come home to us ? And yet it is no more than what we may be all as certain of, as Zaccheus was, if we do as he did. He had been a great sinner ; and so have we ; but he repented truly of all his sins ; and if we do so too, we shall be saved as he was : and if we do it this day, this day will salvation come to us, as it did to him, the same day that he repented.

Well then, that we may be thus happy this day, let us seriously consider how Zaccheus testified his repentance, so as to find grace and favour in the sight of Christ, that we may go and do likewise. That from this day forward, we may be reckoned among true penitents, such as he was, that we may obtain the same salvation as he did.

Zaccheus therefore being come unto himself, as soon as Christ was come into his house, and being touched with a sincere repentance for all the errors of his life past, expressed in the same way as Daniel advised Nebuchadnezzar to do it, when he said, *Wherefore, O king, let my counsel be acceptable unto thee, and break off thy sins by righteousness, and thine iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*, Dan. iv. 27. Thus did Zaccheus, *he brake off his sins by righteousness*, in making just and full restitution of what he had wronged others of ; and *brake off his iniquities by shewing mercy to the poor*, in that he gave them half of all his goods.

He begins with his charity and mercy to the poor

first, as the way whereby to find mercy at the hands of God, in the pardon of his sins ; and therefore we read, that *alms maketh atonement for sins*, Ecclus. iii. 30. that is, they put a man into the way of having the propitiation or atonement which Christ hath made for the sins of mankind, applied particularly to him. As we see in the famous instance of Cornelius the centurion, whose *alms*, together with his prayers, being gone up for a memorial before God, God sent an angel from heaven, on purpose to direct him how to come to the knowledge of Christ, and so to pardon and salvation by him, Acts x.

But as Zaccheus's sins had been great, his alms must be so too. And therefore, not contenting himself with giving a little, but to make his future charity bear some proportion to his former sins, he resolves to make the poor equal sharers with him in his whole estate, *Half of my goods*, says he, *I give to the poor*. Half of my goods, that is, of such as shall remain to me after I have made complete restitution of what I have taken wrongfully from others, for he could reckon up no more as his own ; but whatsoever he could truly call his own, that he would divide into equal parts, and keep one for himself, and his own necessary occasions, and give the other to the poor, for the relief of their necessities.

But then you will say, are we bound to do so too ? To give half of our estates to poor people, as he did ? No surely ; it is not necessary for all to follow his steps in this particular, but only for such as are in the same circumstances with him. Some may be bound to give more, others may not be bound to give so much as he did. Our Lord enjoined the young rich man in the Gospel to sell not only *half*, but *all that he had*, and give to the poor, Matt. xix. 21. and commended the poor widow for casting into the treasury all that she had, even all her living, Mark xii. 44. But others, on the contrary, may be so far from being bound to give either all or half, that they may be bound not to

give a fifth part, because their circumstances may be such that they cannot do it without transgressing such commands of God, whereby they are pre-obliged to provide necessaries for themselves and families. Indeed as to the *quota*, how much every one ought to give to pious and charitable uses, it is no where determined in Scripture ; for God would have it to be a free-will offering : and therefore, although he hath commanded us in general to offer, he hath left it to our own free-wills how much to offer, that so there may be something in it of our own choice, as well as of his commands. Only knowing the corruption of our wills, and how prone we are to abuse that freedom that he hath given us in this particular, he hath set us some general rules whereby to regulate ourselves in it ; and these we are all bound to observe, as exactly as Zaccheus himself did ; who hath set us such an example in it, that could we follow it as we ought, our charity would be as acceptable to Christ as his own.

For first, Zaccheus being sensible of his former sins, not only in griping, but likewise in not relieving the poor as he ought to have done, he now resolves to be free and liberal to them for the future ; not only to give them a little something now and then, but to give so much, as to demonstrate himself to be now as liberal, as he was before covetous : as the prophet saith, *the liberal man deviseth liberal things*, Isa. xxxii. 8. So Zaccheus did ; he devised how to distribute his charity, as that he might become a truly liberal man ; and for that purpose did not trouble himself about the *minimum quod sit*, just how much he was bound to give, but resolved to give much, so much, that he might be sure to give rather more than the law strictly required of him, than less. The same we read of Cornelius too, *that he gave much alms to the people*, Acts x. 2. And the same measures certainly we ought to take in the distribution of our alms ; for, as St. Paul saith, *he that soweth sparingly, shall reap also sparingly : and he that soweth*

bountifully, shall reap also bountifully, 2 Cor ix. 6. Which is the same in effect with that of the Wise-man, *The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth shall be watered also of himself*, Prov. xi. 25. From whence we may observe, that the more we give to the poor, the more we shall receive from God; the more bountiful we are to them, the more bountiful he will be to us; which plainly shews, that although he hath nowhere appointed us how much to give, yet he is pleased with them that give much, more than with those who give but little: and, by consequence, that as we expect and desire much mercy from him, we must express as much charity to others as we can.

As much, I say, as we can; for herein also Zaccheus hath set us an example, who did not only resolve to give liberally in general, but to give as liberally as his estate would bear: and for that purpose, considering with himself how much he had that he might properly call his own, and that one half of it would be sufficient for himself and his family, he resolved to give the other half to the poor. And though all are not bound to give the same proportion as he did, yet all should give in some proportion to what they have, be it more or less. This rule the apostle himself prescribed to the Corinthians by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, who hath also kept it upon record, that all Christians might observe it: *Upon the first day of the week*, saith he, *let every one lay by him in store* (for the poor saints) *as God hath prospered him*, 1 Cor. xvi. 2. Which doth not only shew, that all Christians, even in the apostle's time, made their offerings as we now do, by the order of our church, every Lord's day; but likewise that every one was bound to give according to his ability, or, as the apostle words it, *as God hath prospered him*. The same in effect was commanded long before by Moses, saying, *And thou shalt keep the feast of weeks unto the Lord thy God, with a tribute of a free-will offering, which thou shalt give according as the Lord thy*

God hath blessed thee, Deut. xvi. 10. And a greater than either St. Paul or Moses, even Christ himself, requires as much, where he saith, *But rather give alms as ye are able ; and behold all things that are clean to you*, as it is rightly translated in the margin of your Bibles, Luke xi. 41. For so the Greek words, *πλὴν τὰ ἐνόντα δότε ἐλεημόσυνην*, properly signify, as might easily be shewn. So that our Lord himself here affirms, that if we give as much alms as we are able, all things are clean to us, otherwise not : and therefore, in order to our having all things to be clean to us, he requires us to give as much as we can to pious and charitable uses ; and if we do that, how much or how little soever it be, it will still be acceptable to God : according to that remarkable passage in the book of Tobit, inserted among the sentences we read at the Offertory, *Be merciful after thy power : if thou hast much, give plenteously ; if thou hast little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little ; for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity*, Tobit iv. 8, 9. And therefore as I hope ye all make conscience of giving something to the poor, out of that which God hath given to you for that purpose ; so I desire that you would always observe this rule in the doing of it, even to proportion your charity to your estates, lest otherwise God justly proportion your estates to your charity : and if ye do not give as much as ye are able, make you able to give no more than ye do.

Moreover, although Zaccheus gave so great a proportion of his estate to the poor, he did it freely and of his own accord. Nobody, as we read of, bade him, or so much as advised him to it. It was purely his own choice, as appears both from his promptness and readiness to do it, and likewise from that cheerfulness and alacrity he expressed in doing it. So soon as ever he duly considered it was his duty, his mind was wholly bent upon it ; and therefore without being spoke to, he stands up, and freely offers half his estate to God for the use of the

poor; and in this also we ought to follow him. Whatsoever we give, we must give it with our hearts as well as with our hands, otherwise howsoever acceptable it may be to the poor, it will not be so to God; who, as he hath commanded us to give, so he hath commanded us likewise to do it heartily. *Thou shalt surely give, saith he, unto thy poor brother, and thine heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him,* Deut. xv. 10. You must not be grieved that God requires this of you, but be glad to give, as the poor are to receive: *He that giveth, saith the apostle, let him do it with simplicity: he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness,* Rom. xii. 8. And elsewhere, *Every man, according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver,* 2 Cor. ix. 7.

But how came this Publican all of a sudden to be thus willing to part with half his estate? Doubtless that which inclined him chiefly to it, was the great respect and reverence he had for Christ then present, and his hearty desire to please him. As appears from his handing up and applying himself to Christ, saying, *Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor* Where, as he plainly acknowledgeth Christ to be his Lord, so he desires him to take notice of what he was about to say and do; which clearly shews, that he had a regard to Christ in what he did: and so must we too, in whatsoever we give unto the poor. Though we give it to them, we must not give it for theirs, but for Christ's sake, with respect to his command, and for the setting forth of his honour, as he is our great Lord and Master. And whatsoever we thus sincerely do upon his account, he will be sure to accept of it, and to reward us accordingly for it; for we have his own word for it, Mark ix. 41. Matt. x. 42.

There is still another thing behind, much to be observed in Zaccheus's charity; and that is, that he did it presently, at the same time that he was convinced it was his duty, *Behold, Lord, saith he, the half of my*

goods I give to the poor ; he speaks in the present not in the future tense ; not *I will give* it hereafter, but *I do give* it now ; now that I am in thy presence, and in the presence of all these people, who are as so many witnesses of this my deed of gift, I give and dedicate to the use of the poor half of my whole estate ; so that from this day forward, I will not look upon it as mine own, but as theirs for thy sake.

And herein certainly all are obliged to follow his example : whatsoever God hath enabled you to give to pious and charitable uses, you must not put off the giving it from day to day, much less to your last day, as the custom of some is, who will give nothing to others so long as they can keep it themselves ; but hope to make amends for the neglect of this great duty all their lives, by doing it when they die ; when they die, they know they must part with their estates whether they will or no ; and therefore in their last will and testament, which is not in force till they are dead, they can make a shift to bequeath something to the poor. But although the poor may be the better for what they then give, they themselves will be never the better for it, it being no charity at all, forasmuch as they do not then give it from themselves, but from their heirs and executors. Neither are the poor beholden to them, but to their mortality for it ; for at this rate, if they should never die, they would never give. This is not to do as Zaccheus did, who was so far from deferring his charity to the last, that it was the first thing he did after his conversion. And I heartily wish, that we could all follow him in this, as well as in the other particulars, even resolve this day to give as much as we can to the poor, for God's sake ; that so Christ may say of us, as he did of him, *This day is salvation come into this parish*, and to all that are here before me at this time.

Zaccheus having thus given half his goods to the poor, he presently considered what goods he had which he could properly call his own, and therefore had power to

do what he pleased with them ; for he was conscious to himself, that he had many goods in his possession which he had no right or title to, but was bound to restore them to their right owners, which he therefore resolves immediately to do ; for till that was done, he could not tell how to perform his former promise of giving half his goods to the poor, for fear of giving other men's as well as his own, which would have spoiled his charity to all intents and purposes ; and therefore he had no sooner said, *Behold, Lord, half of my goods I give to the poor*, but he adds with the same breath, *and whatsoever I have wronged any man, or taken from any man by false accusation, I restore him four-fold*. In which words there are two things to be considered, what it was he would restore, and how he would restore it, even *four-fold*.

As for the first, how he would restore whatsoever he had unjustly or wrongfully gotten from any man, whether by false accusation, or any other unlawful way ; for so the word ἐσυκοφάντησα here used signifies, as I could easily shew. But for our better understanding of it, we must call to mind, what I observed before, that the publicans were the farmers of the public revenues, for which they paid a considerable sum of money, or else gave security for it, and therefore were allowed to make what they could of them, and were entrusted with full power and authority to demand and receive them as they became due ; but if it was necessary they should have such power granted them, it was almost impossible to prevent their abusing it, by exacting more than what was really their due ; which they so commonly did, that the magistrates were forced to make very severe laws to restrain them ; some of which are still extant in the digests or body of the old Roman laws. One of which begins thus, *Quantæ audaciæ et quantæ temeritatis sint publicanorum factiones, nemo est qui nesciat*. Of how great boldness, of how great rashness the factions or combi-

nations of the publicans are, nobody can be ignorant, lib. 12. *D. de Publicanis*. Livy, in his 25th book, gives a strange instance of the horrible vices they were guilty of; for which, as Suidas truly saith, Διεβέβλητο παρὰ τοῖς παλαιοῖς καὶ τὸ τοῦ τελώνου ὄνομα, The very name of a publican was odious to the ancients. Where he also reckons up some of the horrid sins that were common among them: as the open force and violence they used in their exactions, their incorrigible rapine, their shameless covetousness, their unreasonable contentiousness, and their impudent dealing with people, to gain something from them, *Suid. in τελώνης*.

Indeed, fraud, cozenage, lying, perjury, oppression, and extortion, were the common sins of all publicans in those days. And therefore it is no wonder that publicans and sinners are so often joined together in the New Testament, as if they were synonymous terms, as Matt. xi. 19. ix. 11 Mark ii. 15. Luke v. 30. And publicans are always placed first, as being not only sinners, but the greatest of all sinners. And it is very observable, that when the publicans came to John the Baptist, and asked him what they should do, he said unto them, *Exact no more than that which is appointed you*, Luke iii. 13. Implying that extortions was the common sin they were all guilty of; and that to exact no more than their due, was so extraordinary a virtue in a publican, that he could require no more of them, in order to their being baptized by him.

From hence therefore we may gather what it was which Zaccheus here promiseth to restore; for he being a publican, and one of the chief of them, had doubtless been guilty of the same sins, which were so rife among the men of his order, as Cicero, or rather of his faction, as the civil law, calls it; he had cozened and cheated many a poor man; he had extorted and exacted more than was appointed him; he had wronged others to enrich himself; he had by open violence and secret

fraud and cunning, got other men's money and goods into his hand, which he now resolves to restore, and not only so, but to do it four-fold.

But why four-fold? why any more than what he had unjustly gotten? and why so much more as four-fold? To understand this, we must consider, that by the Mosaic law, which he professed, *if a man stole an ox, or a sheep, and killed it, or sold it, he was bound to restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep*, Exod. xxii. 1. According to which law, when Nathan the prophet in his parable told David, that a rich man had taken away a poor man's lamb; David said, that *he should restore the lamb four-fold*, 2 Sam. xii. 6. From whence it appears, that in some cases of theft, a four-fold restitution was required by the law of God: and so it was too by the law of the Roman empire, under which Zaccheus lived, and of which he held his place; for so we read in the *Pandects*, or body of the old Roman laws still extant, that goods either taken away by force, or manifestly stolen, were to be restored in *quadruplin*, that is, four-fold, lib. i. *D. de Publicanis*. But this law was made more mild and gentle as to publicans: for of them it is enacted, *Quod illicite, publice privatumque exactum est, cum ultero tanto passis injuriam exorbitur: per vim res extorta, cum pœna tripli restituitur*, lib. ix. §. *in eod*. What is unlawfully exacted by a publican, either publicly or privately, is paid back with as much more to those who have suffered the wrong: but what is extorted by force, is restored three-fold.

But there was this great privilege also granted to a publican, that if he restored what he had forcibly taken away without going to law about it, *omni onere exuitur*, he was freed from any further punishment or trouble about it, lib. i. §. *in eod*. So that Zaccheus being a publican, if he had voluntarily restored what he had unjustly taken away, or the bare value of it, the law could have taken no hold of him; and if he had stood it out

to the last, he could have been forced to have restored no more than the double of what he had unlawfully exacted, or the treble of what he had violently extorted from any man.

But Zaccheus being now truly penitent for his sins, would not make use of the favour which the law shewed to publicans ; but considering that the law both of God and man required four-fold restitution in the case of manifest theft, and being fully persuaded in his conscience, that all the exaction and extortion that he had used, was plainly theft or robbery, howsoever the law might call it, he presently resolves to restore whatsoever he had any way wronged any man of four-fold. That so he might be sure to do not only what the law, but what his own conscience, required of him ; which being once touched with a sense of his sin, would never have been satisfied with his making only simple restitution of what he had unlawfully gotten ; for by that means he would have suffered nothing for his sin, neither would he have made full restitution of all that he had unjustly gotten ; for he had doubtless wrongfully taken money from some people many years before ; all which time he had enjoyed and they had lost the use of the said money, which in an ordinary way of trading might probably have amounted to four times as much as the principal ; and therefore he would not content himself with restoring any less, for fear he should restore too little : he was now resolved to do all he could to express his hearty sorrow and repentance for what he had done ; and for that purpose having given half his own goods to the poor, so whatsoever he had wronged other men of, he restores it to them four-fold.

And herein Zaccheus hath set you a great example. Not that all are bound to restore four-fold, any more than to give half their goods to the poor, as he did ; for his case was extraordinary in this also, and therefore is not to be brought in as an ordinary example ; I say ordinary, for some men may be in such circumstances,

that they may be much obliged as he was, to make the same restitution as he did. But we speak now only of ordinary or common restitution, or at least of that, which ought to be as common and ordinary as deceit or fraud : and in this certainly, all men that ever wronged others ought to follow this publican's example in restoring it fully to them.

But this being a matter wherein many persons are deeply concerned, we shall briefly consider, who are bound to make restitution, and how and why they ought to do it.

As for the first, it is easy to determine who are bound to make restitution, even all persons that ever wronged any man of any thing whatsoever, they are all bound to restore it again ; by what way or means soever it was that they wronged him. All that by forging of deeds, or suborning of witnesses, have got possession of other men's estates. All that by robbing upon the high-way, breaking open of houses, picking of pockets, or by any other kind of theft have stolen any thing from their neighbours. All apprentices and servants that have neglected their master's business, embezzled his goods, purloined his money, and converted any part of his estate to their own use. All that by false weights, false measures, or false sights, have imposed upon their customers, so as to give them either less, or not so good as they agreed for. All that industriously dissemble or conceal the faults or defects of the wares they sell, and so make the buyer pay more than what it is really worth according to the market price. All that by their diabolical cunning and subtlety, cheat, or over-reach those they deal with, either in buying or selling, or any sort of contract or bargain. All that by lying or swearing, or any such wicked artifice, defraud their creditors, or any other persons, of what is their just due. All that by smuggling their goods, forswearing themselves, or bribing of servants, withhold from the king any part of his customs, or other revenues, which the laws of God,

and of the land, have given him a just right and title to. All that by slandering or false accusing of their neighbours, have taken from them what they had, or hindered them from getting what they lawfully might. In short, all that have been either principals or accessaries in wronging any man of any thing, howsoever it was done, they are bound to make him full restitution.

I say full restitution : which is the next thing to be considered ; for all that are bound to make any restitution, are bound to make it as full as they can, so as to restore, if it be possible, the very thing itself in specie ; and if that cannot be, the full value of it in money or other commodities, together with a reasonable consideration for what he that took it hath gotten by having it, and he from whom it was taken hath lost for want of it ; for otherwise the party wronged will not have full recompence made him for the wrong that was done him : and he that did the wrong, will still have something in his hand which is not his own, as not being gotten by his own goods, but by his from whom he took them. Hence it is, that by the Mosaic law something more was always to be restored than was taken away either by stealth or fraud. The least that was required was a fifth part over and above the principal, Lev. vi. 5. And by parity of reason, I suppose the least that any one among us ought to restore, besides the principal, is the legal interest of it, for so long time as he hath had it : as if a man wronged his neighbour of an hundred pounds two years ago, the least he ought to restore is an hundred and ten ; and so proportionably for other sums. But here it will be necessary to resolve a few cases of conscience which often occur.

Question 1 Suppose the person whom you have wronged be dead, to whom must ye make restitution ?

Answer. To his heirs, executors, administrators, or to that person to whom the law would have given it, in case you had not taken it away ; but in case that there be no such person to be found, as sometimes there is

not, then you must restore it to God, as the supreme Proprietor of all things, and the only owner that you can find of it; be sure it is none of yours, you can claim no right to it, neither can any one else as you can find upon earth: so that it is as a waft or stray, that belongs only to the head Landlord of the world, to whom therefore you must restore it, by laying it out upon pious or charitable uses, as he himself also commanded in the old law, Numb. v. 8.

Quest. 2. Suppose a man be not able to make full restitution to all whom he hath wronged, what must he do?

Answ. His case is very sad and deplorable: for if his eyes be once opened so as to see his sin and folly, he will not be able to endure himself, for having wronged others, and disabled himself from righting them again: howsoever, I would not have such a man to despair, but repent, and manifest his repentance as well as he can; for which purpose, if he cannot restore as much as he ought, he ought to restore as much as he can; and labour day and night to get if possible out of that miserable condition; and if, after all, he cannot by any lawful means get enough to satisfy those whom he hath wronged, he ought to go to them and confess his sin, and desire them to remit the wrongs that he hath done them; in which case they are bound in conscience to do it; as they themselves expect and desire that Almighty God should pardon the sins that they have committed against him. And if he who suffered the wrong, hath once forgiven it, he that did it hath no more to do, but to make his peace with God too; and then his conscience may be quiet.

Quest. 3. What must they do, who are conscious to themselves that they have wronged many, but know not who they are?

Answ. This is the case of many tradesmen, who, by false weights or measures, or other unjust dealing, defraud and cheat persons that come accidentally into

their shops and warehouses, whom they never saw before nor since, and perhaps could not know them again if they should see them ; so that it is impossible for them ever to make restitution to the persons themselves, or to the families they have wronged ; but they must of necessity live and die in debt to them : and it is very difficult, if not impossible, for them ever to extricate themselves out of that miserable condition which their own covetousness hath brought them into ; which should make all men very cautious how they deal in the world, lest for the sake of a little money they contract that guilt which can never be wiped off. The best advice that I can give such is, first, to leave off such wicked courses, and then to compute as well as they can what they have gotten by such unjust dealings, and to make full restitution of whatsoever they have wronged those of whom they know, and to pay the overplus all to the poor. I say pay, not give it ; for it is not an act of charity, but justice : they owe it to somebody, though they do not know to whom ; if they did, they ought to pay it to them : but seeing they do not know the persons to whom they ought to pay it, they pay it to the poor in their steads ; but so that if they should ever happen to know the persons themselves whom they have wronged, they are bound in conscience to pay it to them too : that being the only proper restitution which is made to the person that is wronged ; and which all ought to make, to the utmost of their power.

And this brings me to the last thing I promised to shew, even why they who have wronged others, are bound to restore to them whatsoever they have wronged them of ; or what necessity there is of making such restitution as I have now described. To understand this, we may consider, first, that there is the same obligation upon all persons to restore what they have wronged others of, as there is not to wrong them ; for they wrong them all the while, until they have restored it again, by detaining from them the use of what they have wronged them of :

so that he who by stealth or fraud, or any other unlawful way, gets five pounds, suppose of another man's, into his hands, he doth not only sin in the first act whereby he unlawfully got it, but he commits the same sin all the while he keeps it; for so long as he hath it in his hands, he still wrongs his neighbour as much as he did when he first got it; and therefore all those laws of God which forbid you to steal or defraud others, oblige you to restore what you have defrauded or stolen from them; for till that be done, ye live in the plain breach and violation of those divine laws: and whatsoever sin it was whereby ye got your neighbour's goods at first, ye commit the same sin every day, until ye put him again into the actual possession of them; which sufficiently demonstrates the absolute necessity of restoring, as soon as possible, whatsoever any of you have defrauded others of, lest otherwise ye both live and die in sin.

Moreover, ye cannot but all acknowledge the equity of that golden rule which our Lord hath set you, and commanded you to walk by it, saying, *All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them*, Matt. vii. 12. According to which, restitution must needs be necessary; for as I believe there are but few of you, but some time or other have been circumvented and wronged in your estates, I dare say there is not a man of you but would have restitution made you of whatsoever have been wrongfully taken from you: now therefore lay your hands upon your breast, and do as ye would be done by; whatsoever ye have been wronged of by others, ye would have restored to you; and therefore, whatsoever ye have wronged others of, do ye restore that to them, otherwise ye do not observe Christ's command, as becometh honest and good men to do.

And indeed honest and good men in all ages have made as much conscience of this, as of any one duty whatsoever. When Joseph had privately conveyed his

brethren's money into their sacks, though they knew not how it came there, and so could have no hand in it, yet their father Jacob would needs restore it back again, saying, *Carry it again in your hands, peradventure it was an oversight*, Gen. xliii. 12. Whence we may observe how scrupulous the good old man was of making restitution, upon a mere suspicion that it might be an oversight. Whereby he hath taught you all to be so exact and just in restoring what ye have of other men's in your hands, that although ye get it not by plain fraud or cheating, but only by some oversight or inadvertency either in them or yourselves, ye restore it to them again as soon as you can. Samuel's example also is much to be observed in this case, who, having gathered all Israel together, said to them, *Behold, here am I: witness against me before the Lord, and before his anointed: whose ox have I taken? or whose ass have I taken? or whom have I defrauded? or whom have I oppressed? or of whose hand have I received any bribe to blind mine eyes therewith? and I will restore it you*, 1 Sam. xii. 3. He knew not that he had wronged any man; but if any man knew he had, he was ready to make him restitution. So ye, although ye cannot remember that ye ever got any thing from any man by any unlawful means; yet if others can remember and prove it, ye ought immediately to restore it to the right owner.

To the right owner I say, for so certainly he is, by what unlawful way soever ye came by it: it is not yours, but his from whom ye got it; it is as much his now it is in your hands, as when it was in his own; for injustice can never deprive a man of his right to what he hath justly gotten; for that is still in him, wheresoever the thing itself lies, whether in his hands or yours; and therefore if ye have unjustly got it from him, ye are bound to restore it him again, by the same laws which oblige you to pay every one their own; and until ye do

that, ye are his debtors, and ought to take as much care to pay him, as ye do to pay any bond or bill that you ever signed.

But that which should most of all excite and prevail with you to restore whatsoever ye have either got or kept unjustly from other men is, because till this be done your sin can never be pardoned: for it is plain, there can be no pardon without true repentance; and it is plain, that there can be no true repentance without restitution; for no man can be said to be truly penitent for any sin, that still continues in it; but, as I observed before, he that sinned in getting his neighbour's goods, still continues in the same sin, until he hath restored them to him; for he wrongs him as much by unlawful keeping, as he did by unlawful getting of them. And therefore it is in vain to pretend that you are sorry for the sin, until you restore what you got by it. As St. Augustin observes, *Si enim res aliena, propter quam peccatum est, cum reddi possit, non redditur, non agitur pœnitentis, sed fingitur.* "If another man's goods, for which the sin was committed, be not restored when they may, repentance is not acted, but feigned." And therefore he adds, *Si autem veraciter agitur, non remittetur peccatum, nisi restituatur ablatum.* "But if repentance be truly acted, the sin will not be forgiven, except what was taken away be restored." *August. epist. 54. ad Macedonium.* Hence in the old law, when any one had robbed, or deceived, or defrauded his neighbour, as ever he desired to have his sin pardoned, he was first to restore what he had taken from him, with a fifth part more; when that was done, he was to carry a ram for his trespass-offering to the priest, who with that made an atonement for him, and then his sin was forgiven, Lev. vi. 2, 3, &c. So that until he had made restitution, the priest could not accept of his offering, nor make an atonement for him, and so till then, his sin could not be pardoned. To this our Lord seems to allude, Matt. v. 23, 24. And it is very observable, that

Almighty God himself, by the prophet Ezekiel, promiseth to pardon such sins only upon these terms ; *If the wicked*, saith he, *restore the pledge, and give again that he hath robbed, and walk in the statutes of life, without committing iniquity, he shall surely live, he shall not die*, Ezek. xxxiii. 15. But we need not have gone any further than my text itself, to have proved this ; for here we find that upon Zaccheus's making restitution, our Lord presently said, *This day is salvation come into this house*. Whereby he hath given us to understand, that till that time the man had been in a state of sin and damnation ; but now that he had restored whatsoever he had wronged others of, his sin was pardoned, and his soul should be saved.

These things I thought good to put you in mind of at this time ; because, as I fear, many among you have, by lying, or stealing, or cheating, or some unlawful way or other, got other men's money and goods into your hands ; so, I hope, there are none of you but are now sorry for it, and desire Almighty God to pardon it. But that I am sure he will never do until you have restored, if ye be able, what ye have so gotten. It is in vain for you to expect it ; he hath in effect told you that he will not ; and how can ye expect that he should break his word for you ? No, mistake not yourselves ; so long as you are so unjust to others, as not to restore what ye have wrongfully taken from them, ye have no ground to hope that God will be so merciful to you, as to pardon the sins that ye have committed against him ; but rather, till that be done, ye must look for nothing but wrath and indignation from him, and all the curses that he hath denounced against impenitent sinners. He will curse what ye have got lawfully, for the sake of that which ye have unlawfully gotten ; it will be a moth in your estates, which will certainly eat them up either in your own or your children's time, Jer. xvii. 11. And it would be well for you if that was all ; for if ye live any longer without making restitution, ye may die

also without doing it, and by consequence bewail your folly and madness in hell-fire for evermore.

Let me therefore beseech and advise you all to go home and retire into your closet, or some private place, and there look back upon your lives, recollect yourselves, and consider seriously whether ye have not injured some persons or other, by getting some part of their estates into your hands ; and if upon an impartial view you find ye have, let not the sun go down before ye have at least resolved to make restitution as soon as possible ; and likewise to express your repentance for defrauding others, by a more than ordinary liberality to the poor. Do this, and then you may firmly believe, that God, for Christ's sake, will pardon your sin, and receive you again into his grace and favour ; then ye will do this day, as Zaccheus once did ; and then Christ will say to every one of you, as he did to him, *This day is salvation come into this house.* Which God grant it may, through the same Jesus Christ ; to whom be glory for ever. Amen.

S E R M O N L X V .

A GOOD-FRIDAY SERMON.

ZECH. xii. 10.

*And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced,
and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for
his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as
one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*

WE this day commemorate the passion of our blessed Saviour, the passion of the Son of God, the greatest mystery that ever was known or heard of in the world ; that light itself should be darkened, love rejected, innocence accused, justice condemned, life die, even God himself suffer, who is able to think upon it without ecstasies and raptures ? Who can speak of it without astonishment and admiration ? And yet how strange soever it may seem to be, it is altogether as true too, as being attested by truth and veracity itself.

And it is well for us it was so, even that he who suffered was truly God as well as man ; otherwise we had been all lost and undone for ever ; for if he had not been man, he could not have suffered at all for us ; so if he had not been God too, he could not have saved us by his sufferings ; all the virtue and efficacy of his passions depending altogether upon the worth and excellency of the person that underwent them, who being God as well as man, although he suffered only in his manhood, yet that manhood being at the same time united to the Godhead in the same person, these his sufferings could

not but be of infinite value and merit, as being the sufferings of God himself, who is therefore said to have *purchased his church with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28.

And this indeed is the only ground and foundation of all our hopes and expectations from Christ; for he being both perfect God and perfect man in one and the same person, did, by his own oblation of himself once offered, make a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world; whereby there is none of us but in and through him may now obtain both the pardon of all our sins, and the eternal happiness and salvation of our souls, if we do but perform those easy conditions which are required of us, in order to our having the sufferings of our human nature in Christ applied to our own particular persons; that so we may be looked upon as having already undergone the punishment of our sins in him, who died in our stead; and by virtue of his merit and mediation for us, may be truly sanctified, and by consequence received into God's grace and favour here, and into his kingdom and glory hereafter

And verily now that Christ hath done and suffered so much for us, we cannot surely but look upon ourselves as highly obliged to do and suffer all we can for him, at least, all that he expects from us, which indeed is but very little; or rather, nothing in comparison of his love and kindness to us. For what would he have us do for him? Only what he himself hath commanded in the words of my text, saying, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, &c.*

For that these words are to be understood of Christ, is certain from the infallible testimony of St. John himself, who having related the doleful tragedy of our Lord's passion, how they pierced his hands and feet with nails, and his side with a spear, he saith, *That all this was done that the Scripture might be fulfilled*, which saith, *They shall look on him whom they have pierced*, John

xix. 37 Where he plainly quotes the words of my text, and applies them to our blessed Saviour: and indeed they cannot possibly be understood of any other person in the world; for none could speak these words but one who was both God and man. That he was God, is plain from the former part of the verse, where he saith, *I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and supplication.* For it is acknowledged by all, that the Spirit of grace is not at the disposal of any creature, but that it is only in the power of God to bestow it upon us. And therefore he that here promiseth to pour out his Spirit upon his church, could be no other than God himself: and then that he was man too, appears from the next words, even those of my text, *and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced.* For if he had not been man, he would not have been capable of being pierced by them. In short, therefore, if he had not been God, he could not have said, *I will pour upon them the Spirit of grace and supplication;* and if he had not been man, he could not have said, *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced.* And therefore he that spake these words could be no other than Christ himself, there being no person in the world that ever was, or so much as pretended to be, both God and man, but only he.

And as these words are spoken by Christ himself, so he spake them to his whole church, and all the members of it, which he here calls the house of David, and the inhabitants of Jerusalem; under which titles, both in this and other prophets, the whole church of Christ is frequently comprehended, especially in this place, where the Spirit of grace and supplication is promised. For this promise of the Spirit cannot possibly be restrained only to the Jewish nation, or inhabitants of Jerusalem, in a strict and literal sense; it being a great promise which was always made, and hath been all along fulfilled to the universal church, or congregation of faithful peo-

ple dispersed over the whole world. And therefore we, as members of the catholic church, are all equally concerned in what is here said. But we must take all together. And as we desire Christ should perform the promise which here he makes to us, so we must be sure to perform the duties which he here requires of us, saying, *And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and shall mourn for him, &c.*

First, saith he, *they shall look upon me whom they have pierced*; which words, I confess, may seem to be a promise, as well as command; our Saviour here promising to assist us with his grace and Spirit, to look upon him as we ought to do; but seeing he neither promiseth to enable us to do any thing but what himself commandeth us to do, I shall briefly consider the words only as containing Christ's command to us, and by consequence our duty unto him; and that we may understand his divine will and pleasure in them aright, we must know that the verb *הביט* here used in the original sometimes signifies the beholding any object with our bodily eyes; but in this place it cannot possibly be so understood, for in that sense the whole church never did, nor ever shall see Christ, until we all appear before his judgment-seat; and therefore the word must needs be here, as it is elsewhere, used in a more large and metaphorical sense, even for our looking upon him with the eye, not of sense, but of reason and faith.

And so it imports, that we ought to contemplate often, and meditate upon our Saviour's death, not simply as in itself considered, but as suffered purely upon our account. *They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*; implying, that we should look upon him as pierced, as crucified by ourselves, for our sins, so as to acknowledge and believe, that whatsoever he suffered was not for his own, but only for our sakes; that he bare our grief, and carried our sorrows. He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that by his

stripes we might be healed. He assumed our human, that we might partake of his divine nature. He was weary, that we might rest; he hungered, that we might eat the bread, and thirsted, that we might drink the water, of life. He grieved, that we might rejoice; wept, that we might laugh; and became miserable, to make us happy. He was apprehended, that we might escape; accused, that we might be quitted; and condemned, that we might be absolved. He died, that we might live; and was crucified by men, that we might be justified before God. In brief, *he was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21

And looking thus upon Christ, as dying for us, and bearing the punishment of our sins, that we might be freed from them; we are to look up unto him, as the word also signifies, so as to expect and hope for pardon and salvation from him, humbly trusting and confiding, and believing on him, both for grace to repent, that our sins may be pardoned; and for pardon of our sins, when we have repented; and likewise for his continual assistance of us in the performance of all such good works as he hath prepared for us to walk in; that we may do all things through Christ that strengthened us, and be made so holy now, that in and through him we may be happy for ever.

For which end, we must perform the other duty also here enjoined, which I design chiefly to speak to, as expressed in these words; *and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son; and be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born.*

In which words, we may observe the person changed from the first to the third. In the foregoing words it was said, *they shall look upon me*; and here, *they shall mourn for him*; which change in the person is very common in the prophets. But here it seems to imply, that though Christ himself spake the former words, or, at least, the prophet in the person of Christ, saying,

They shall look upon me; yet these that immediately follow, *and they shall mourn for him*, were spoken by the prophet only in the name of Christ, as other prophets use to speak. And whereas he saith, *They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness for him, as one is in bitterness for his first-born*; although I do not question, but the prophet might allude to our Saviour's being the only-begotten of the Father, and the first-born of every creature, as the apostle calls him, Col. i. 15. yet I look upon the words as intended principally to express the greatness of that grief and mourning which should be in the church for the passion of our blessed Saviour; like that of a man that hath lost his only son, or his first-born; which being the greatest loss a man can suffer, it usually causes the greatest sorrow that a man can shew in this world.

Now in speaking to this duty, I shall first shew, that there ought to be some time set apart every year to commemorate our Saviour's passion, and to fast and mourn for the occasion of it: and then, secondly, I shall endeavour to assist and direct you in the performance of it.

As for the first, I think it needful to speak something to it, both to justify our present meeting together upon this occasion, and also because my text itself leads me to it, and supplies me with an argument for it; for when the prophet hath told us how the church shall mourn for the death of Christ, he in the next words saith, *In that day there shall be great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo.*

For the right understanding of which words, we must know first, that Hadadrimmon was a city near Jezreel, in the valley of Megiddo, which St. Jerome saith in his time was called Maximianopolis. Secondly, near to this city, in the valley of Megiddo, that pious king Josiah was slain by Pharaoh-Necho, king of Egypt, as we read

in 2 Chron. xxxv. 21. Thirdly, upon the death of that good king, the prophet Jeremiah and the church at that time made great lamentations, and ordered that the death of the said king should be lamented every year, like the death and martyrdom of our late sovereign of ever-blessed memory, as we may easily gather from the 25th verse of the said chapter: from whence also we may observe with St. Jerome, Josephus, and others, that the book of the Lamentations was written by the prophet upon that occasion; and indeed it agrees exactly with the sad and lamentable state of the church immediately after the death of Josiah, although it be here and there interspersed with some prophetic expressions relating to the destruction of Jerusalem, which happened soon after; so that the book of the Lamentations seems to have been a kind of service-book, or office composed by the prophet, and appointed to be used and inserted into their public devotions every year, upon the day when they commemorated and lamented the death of so good a king. Fourthly, this anniversary mourning for Josiah being occasioned by his death near Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo, and the inhabitants of that city being, as may be well supposed, the first that observed it, and the most strict in the observation of it; hence it was afterwards called, *the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo*.

Now the premises being thus considered, it is easy to draw our conclusion from them. For it is here said, that the mourning for the death of Christ shall be like that of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo. But the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddo was an anniversary mourning for the death of king Josiah. And therefore it necessarily follows, that the mourning for our Saviour's passion should be an anniversary too. For otherwise it would not be like to that; and, for my own part, I can see no reason in the world, why these words should be inserted here, and this comparison not used by the prophet, but only to shew

that it is the will of God, that the church should once every year commemorate the passion of our blessed Saviour, with fasting and mourning, as the Jews did the death of king Josiah.

To this we may add another argument out of the Old Testament also, drawn from the day of expiation, so religiously observed in that church by the express command of God himself. For the explaining whereof, we must consider, first, that once every year, namely, upon the tenth day of the seventh month, afterwards called Tisri, the high-priest was to make atonement for the people. For which end, amongst other things, there were two he-goats presented before the Lord; whereof the high-priest took one, and offered him up for a sin-offering, and with the blood of it, he went into the holy of holies, which he never did but upon this day. Then he took the other goat, laid both his hands upon the head of the goat, and confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and laid them upon the head of the goat, and then sent them alive into the wilderness, and therefore it was called Azazel, or the scape-goat, which, as the text says, *bore upon him all their iniquities into a land not inhabited*, Levit. xvi. Now this was a most exact type of Christ, upon whom God hath laid the iniquities of us all. The goat that was offered up as a sin-offering, typified the human nature of Christ; yet was offered up as a sacrifice for our sins. The other, the scape-goat, typified his divine nature; which surviving the human, by virtue of its union to it, carried our sins away into the land of forgetfulness, never to be remembered more. So that this was indeed the most lively representation in the whole Mosaic law of that grand expiatory sacrifice, which Christ, as God-man, was to offer up for the sins of the whole world. Secondly, upon the day that this was done, the people were commanded to afflict themselves. *This*, saith God, *shall be a statute for ever unto you, that in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month, you shall*

afflict your souls, ver 29. that is, you shall afflict them with fasting, as the Jerusalem Targuin and Jonathan expound it, so do the Arabic and Samaritan versions; and not only the Fathers, but Philo Judæus and Josephus, both learned Jews, say they fasted upon that day till evening: so says the Talmud; yea, the prophet Jeremiah calls it the *fasting day*. Jer. xxxvi. 6. and St. Luke, *the fast*, Acts xxvii. 9. The Jews also call it *the fast, the great fast*, sometimes יום, *the day*, καὶ ἐξοχήν, as the greatest day in the whole year. Isaiah calls it *the sabbath*, Isa. lviii. 13. Yea God himself calls it שבת שבתן, *a sabbath of rest*, Lev. xvi. 31. From whence Theodoret rightly observes, that it was πολλὰ τοῦ σαββάτου σεβασμιότερα, much more sacred and venerable than the common sabbath; all which shews in how great esteem this day was amongst them, and how strictly it was observed by the appointment of God himself.

But what should be the reason of all this? Why should this day be so religiously observed above all others? For that we must consider in the third place, that the reason is assigned by God himself, who saith, *You shall then afflict your souls, because on that day atonement shall be made for you to cleanse you, that you may be clean from all your sins before the Lord*, Lev. xvi. 30. and because it is יום כיפור, the day of expiations or atonement, to make atonement for you before the Lord, Lev. xxiii. 28. So that they were therefore to fast and afflict their souls upon that day, because upon that day their sins were expiated. Expiated how? by the blood of bulls and goats? No; that is impossible, as the apostle teacheth, Heb. x. 4. but they were expiated by the blood of Christ, then represented to them under the types and shadows before spoken of.

Hence I observe in the last place, that although the law itself was ceremonial, and therefore abolished; yet the reason of it is moral, and so obligeth us as much as it did them. For we believe and hope for the expiation of our sins by the blood of Christ, as much as they did;

and therefore the same reason that obligeth them to fast and mourn once every year at the representation of Christ's death unto them, the same obligeth us to do the same at the commemoration of it.

Besides that, although the sacrifices then offered were typical, and the day on which they fasted ceremonial, and therefore now not necessary to be observed, but rather necessary not to be observed by us : yet fasting itself is a moral duty, and so of perpetual obligation. And therefore, seeing it hath pleased the most high God to declare it to be his will and pleasure that his church should perform this duty once every year, upon the account of Christ's suffering and making atonement for us, I see no way how it is possible for us to be excused from fasting upon this occasion, any more than we are or can be from fasting in general.

Especially if we consider what our Saviour himself said while he was upon earth : for when some asked him, saying, *Why do the disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but thy disciples fast not ?* he answered them, *Can the children of the bride-chamber fast while the bridegroom is with them ? But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days,* Mark ii. 20. In what days ? Even in those days wherein he the bridegroom was taken from them ; that is, the day whereon he was crucified, and the next day while he lay in the grave, not being restored to them again till his resurrection. In those days, saith he, they shall fast, and that not only at that time, but every year after, when those days return. And think not this to be any novel interpretation of these words ; I will assure you it is near as old as Christianity itself, as appears from Tertullian, who lived in the very next age to the apostles. For he, speaking of the catholic or orthodox Christians at that time, saith, *Certe in evangelio illos dies jejuniis determinatos putant, in quibus ablati est sponsus.* They surely think or believe those days in which the

bridegroom was taken away, to be determined or devoted to fasting in the Gospel itself: and therefore both at that time, and ever after, those days were religiously observed in the church, as might easily be demonstrated. But as for the day of the passion itself, which we are now speaking of, the same ancient Father saith expressly, that upon that day, there was in his time, *Communis et quasi publica jejunii religio*. So that they reckoned it a great part of their religion, to fast upon that day; and so have all Christians in all places and ages ever since, insomuch that there is scarce any one thing in the whole Christian religion, wherein all the professors of it have so unanimously and perpetually agreed, as they have in the strict and religious observation of this day: yea, at this very time, except some few among ourselves, and one or two neighbour nations, go where you will, into any part of the known world; and if there be any Christians there, you will find them at this time of the year fasting and mourning for the passion of Christ. This being one of those common notions and general customs which have spread over the face of the universal church, and have been received in all places of the whole Christian world.

And therefore if any one seem to be contentious, and will, notwithstanding all this, indulge his appetite upon this day, I may answer him as the apostle did the seditious Corinthians, in the like case, that *we have no such custom, neither the churches of God*.

Thus I have briefly touched upon some of those many arguments, which might be produced for the anniversary commemoration of our Saviour's passion; to which I might add, the great reasonableness of the thing itself; but that will better appear under the second general head, wherein I promised to assist and direct you in the performance of this duty; which being the work, the great work of the day, I hope you have spent some time already in it, and are now rightly disposed to hearken to any thing that may conduce to your better observa-

tion of this day, this great day of atonement, whereon the Son of God made satisfaction for our sins.

First therefore, in order hereunto, it is necessary that we seriously contemplate, and be heartily grieved for the sufferings which our blessed Lord underwent for us, *that we look upon him whom we have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourneth for his only son ; and be in bitterness for him, as he that is in bitterness for his first-born.* For which end we need not only ocular representations of our Saviour's passion, as such are used in the Church of Rome, to the great scandal of the Christian religion, turning the mysteries of our faith into matters of sense, as if we were to act altogether by sight, and not by faith. No ; the most effectual means is to meditate with faith and attention upon the sad and doleful story of our Lord's passion, as it is recorded in the holy Gospels : out of which I shall endeavour to represent it to you in few terms.

But that you may be duly affected with it, I desire you to carry two things in your minds all the while that I am speaking of it. First, that he who suffered was the eternal Son of God, of the same nature, substance, and glory with the Father. Secondly, that all he suffered, was only upon our account, and for the expiation of *our sins*, for he had no sins of his own to suffer for ; and therefore had it not been for man's sins, whose nature he assumed, he neither would nor could have suffered at all.

Recollect yourselves therefore, my beloved, and consider each one with himself, what sins you know yourselves to have been guilty of ; and remember, remember these were they, which brought our Saviour with grief and sorrow to his grave. These were they, which exposed the Son of God to all the malice that men or devils could express against him. These were they, which made the Maker of the world to be affronted, reviled, blasphemed, rejected, despised, abused by his own creatures. Indeed, they made his whole life upon

earth, but as one continued exercise of patience and self-denial. But to pass by the misery and trouble he underwent before, let me desire you only to accompany your Lord from the garden to the cross, and then tell me whether you have not all the reason in the world to have compassion for him, whose passions were so great, so exceeding great for you ?

First therefore, go into the garden of Gethsemane, where you find your Saviour the day before his crucifixion, Matt. xxvi. See here what your sins have done, into what a miserable condition they have brought the Son of God himself, lying so heavy, pressing so hard upon him, that his whole soul seems to be overwhelmed with grief and anguish for them. Why, what doth he say ? Even that which should cut us to the very heart to hear *My soul*, saith he, *is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death*, Matt. xxvi. 37. Wonder of wonders ! The joy and life of the whole world is exceeding *sorrowful unto death*, and all for those sins which we, ungrateful wretches that we are, have lived and delighted in. But what ? Shall our Lord be thus exceeding sorrowful for us, and we not sympathize with him ? express no grief, no sorrow for him, nor for those sins neither that brought all this upon him ? Surely it is impossible, or at least unreasonable.

Especially if you go but a little farther into the garden, for there you see—oh ! what do we see there ? The saddest spectacle that ever mortal eye as yet beheld, even the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, lying flat upon the ground, Matt. xxvi. 39. A strange posture for so great a prince, for glory, for majesty, for eminence itself to lie in. But what is the matter ? Alas ! the reason is as plain as sad ; for he sees a *cup in his Father's hand*, a cup of deadly poison, mixed and compounded of all the sins of mankind, and of all the fire and brimstone, the wrath and vengeance that was done unto them. This cup he sees approaching to him, brought by the hand of his own Father ; upon this the

human nature, being left as it were to itself, began to shrink, as loth to drink down this bitter cup. Hence it is that you find him in this doleful posture, wherein he offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, saying, *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.* If it be possible, if thou hast not absolutely determined the contrary, and if it be possible for mankind to be otherwise saved, *let this cup pass from me* : but he had no sooner spoke the words, but the divine will exerts and manifests itself, upon which the human immediately submits ; and therefore he adds, *nevertheless not my will, but thine be done.*

And now *his soul* was made *an offering for sin* indeed. For he hath no sooner drunk this invenomed cup, but see how the poison works ! it puts him into a perfect agony : his veins swell, his blood is inflamed, it ferments and boils to that height, that it forceth its passage through his very skin, *so that he sweats drops, great drops of blood*, Luke xxii. 44. How fast do they trickle down his blessed sides ! as if all the pores of his body were now opened to let his blood out, and grief and anguish into his heart.

Consider this, all ye that are here present, and tell me, whether ever *sorrow was like unto Christ's sorrow*, in the day when God laid on him *the iniquities of us all*. Tell me how it was possible for the human nature to have undergone it, unless it had been supported by the omnipotence of that divine Person to which it was united ? Tell me also how you can be able to endure yourselves, when you remember how much the eternal Son of God endured for you. Verily, methinks, the serious consideration of it would make our hearts sink within us ; at least it should make us lament and mourn, loath and abhor ourselves, and repent in dust and ashes, that ever we should be the occasion of so much grief and anguish, horror and consternation, to the Son of God himself !

But, alas ! this is not all neither : for he was no sooner got up, and a little recovered from his agony, but presently, as if hell was let loose upon him, behold, yonder comes a great multitude of people with *swords* and *staves* to take him, and amongst them his own perfidious disciple, by whose assistance they both find him out, and lay violent hands upon him ; and now we see what it is to fall into the hands of the rabble, against whose rage and fury neither majesty nor innocence itself is any security ; for they have no sooner seized him, but away they hurry him from place to place, affronting, abusing, tormenting him all the way ; they *spit in his face*, they *buffet* him, they *mock* him, they *blindfold* him, they *smite him with the palms of their hands*, they hale him from one judgment-seat to another, crying out wheresoever they come, *Crucify him, crucify him* ; they prefer a thief and a murderer before him, and never leave him till they have extorted a sentence of condemnation against him.

And now our Lord is condemned, he is *condemned* by those that could not have pronounced the sentence against him, had not he himself at the same time vouchsafed them breath to do it. He is condemned to *die*, to *die for us*, that we might not be condemned to eternal death by him ; he is condemned to *die the death*, the shameful, the painful, *the accursed death upon the cross*, and all to redeem us from shame, from pain, and from all the curses of the law.

Oh the power of divine love ! that ever the Judge of the whole world should thus suffer himself to be apprehended, accused, arraigned, condemned by those who must one *day appear before his judgment-seat*, and all that himself at that great day might not condemn both them and all mankind besides.

But now he is condemned, will they offer to execute so severe, so unjust a sentence upon him ? Yes certainly, and that too with all the malice and fury that

hell itself could put into them ; and so soon as condemned, they immediately scourge him, *bow the knee* before him in mockery and derision, they put a *crown of thorns upon his head*, and, instead of a sceptre, a *reed into his hands* ; and in this ignominious manner they lead him to the place of execution, where the cross being fixed in the ground, they raise his sacred body upon it, and fasten his hands and feet into it with nails drove through them ; and in this sad posture they leave the great and glorious King of heaven and earth.

Now let us imagine ourselves to have stood by the cross whilst our Saviour thus hung upon it, and so exercise the same passions as we should have done, had we been really there ; or howsoever let us but act our faith, that faith which is *the evidence of things not seen*, and that will realize these things unto us, as if we saw them before our eyes. By this I see my Saviour, my dear, my only Saviour, hanging yonder upon a cross ; I see his hands stretched out and nailed to the transverse beam at the upper end, and his feet towards the bottom of it ; I see both his hands and feet all bloody ; how fast doth the blood gush out of the orifices which the nails have made ! What sharp and cruel pain must he needs feel in those nerves and tender parts thus pierced with iron ! Methinks I see the pain first raised there, immediately diffuse itself over his whole body ; his head begins to ache, his heart to pant, his joints are all upon a rack, and his soul is tormented with the sense of God's wrath and indignation against sin now laid upon him ; methinks I see him all in a flame, offering up himself as a whole burnt-offering for the sins of mankind in general, and for mine in particular ; vile wretch, unworthy creature that I am, that ever I should be the cause that so pure, so holy, so divine a Person should be thus afflicted !

But hark ! what mournful noise is that I hear ? Woe is me, it is the voice of my Lord, crying out in the an-

guish and bitterness of his soul, *Eli, Eli, lama sabac-thani? My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

From whence I plainly see, that his pain and torment was now as great as it was possible for man in the person of God himself to undergo: for although he doubts not of God's love and favour to his person, yet he finds and feels the utmost of his wrath and justice against the sins of that nature which he assumed, and wherein he now suffers to that height, that he here cries out as if he had been forsaken by God in the midst of all his troubles, and deprived him of all that comfort and assistance which he was wont to receive from him.

My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me? Oh, who is able to express that pain, that grief, that horror which our Lord was in for our sakes, when he spake these doleful words? which certainly was so exceeding great, that he was not able to endure it long; for he soon after commended his spirit into his Father's hands, and so *gave up the ghost*, and died. And died to the astonishment of the whole world. Indeed all the while that he was upon the cross, the sun hid his face as ashamed to behold so sad a sight: and the heavens put on their mourning weeds, as condoling and sympathizing with their Lord and Master. But he was no sooner dead, but the whole creation seems so surprised, amazed, confounded at it; *the veil of the temple was rent in twain, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, the graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept, arose.* What? and shall we alone, of all the creatures in the world, be unconcerned at it? Are our hearts more senseless than the earth? more hard than rocks? more stubborn than the graves? more dead than rotten carcases? How then is it possible for us, who caused all this grief and trouble to him, not to be grieved and troubled for it ourselves? How is it possible for us to look upon him whom we have thus pierced, and not mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and

be in bitterness for him, as he that is in bitterness for his first-born ? How is it possible for us to commemorate our Saviour's passion, as we do this day, and not break forth into this, or the like lamentation for it, *Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears ' that I might weep day and night,* for the death of my blessed Saviour, and for my sins which were the occasion of it : that ever I should have an hand in his blood, and be accessary to the murder of the Son of God ! *the remembrance of it is grievous to me, the burthen of it is intolerable.* What shall I do with myself ? Why, this I am resolved to do : let others laugh and be merry if they can ; for my part, I will weep, lament, and mourn myself into an utter hatred and detestation of those sins which caused my Saviour himself to grieve, lament, and die.

And that is the next thing which is necessary to our right observation of this day. We must not only mourn, but so mourn *for him whom we have pierced*, as to hate and abhor those sins by which we pierced him ; otherwise we cannot be said to mourn, nor so much as to be sorry for him. And if so, how few mourners hath Christ among us ? For how few are there amongst us, but who are so far from hating, that they love and delight in those sins for which Christ suffered so much pain and sorrow ? What else means that luxury and uncleanness, that debauchery and intemperance, that pride and self-conceitedness, that fraud, covetousness, hypocrisy, and indifferency for religion, which is so common, so general amongst us ? Doth not this plainly argue, that notwithstanding all that Christ hath done and suffered for us, we have still more love for our sins than we have for him, and still prefer the world, ourselves, our very lusts, before him ?

But how shall we answer for this, when we come to stand before Christ's tribunal ? yea, what answer shall we return unto him, now that we are in his special presence ?

Oh blessed Jesu ! we confess that we have nothing to plead for ourselves before thee. We adore and magnify thy name, that thou vouchsafedst to suffer for our sins : but we loath, we abhor ourselves before thee, that we have not as yet sufficiently loathed and abhorred our sins for which thou wast pleased to suffer. We humbly crave thy pardon for what is past, and for the future beseech thee to endow us with that measure of thy grace and Holy Spirit, that as thou wast pleased to offer up thyself for us, so we may offer up ourselves wholly unto thee, as we desire to do this day.

This indeed was one great end of our Saviour's death ; and therefore this ought to be the great end of our commemoration of it at this time ; even that we may so mourn for our sins, which was the occasion of it, as to detest and hate them ; and so detest and hate them, as to forsake and leave them, and for the future live wholly unto him that died for us : without which, all our fasting and mourning, and whatsoever else we do this day, will avail us nothing. And certainly as the death of Christ is the most effectual means whereby we may, so it is the strongest argument in the world too why we should forsake our sins, and turn to God. For what ? shall the eternal Son of God condescend so far as to become man, in order to the expiation of our sins, and we shall yet continue in them ? Shall he suffer reproach in his name, pain in his body, sorrow at his very heart for them, and yet we continue in them ? Yea, shall he be arraigned, condemned, and crucified for them too, and yet we continue in them ? Oh ! *tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Ascalon, lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised be glad :* tell it not in hell, publish it not in the regions of darkness, lest the devil himself rejoice, and his fiends triumph to see the Son of God dying for the sins of men, and yet the sons of men still living in their sins ! What is, if this be not, to crucify to yourselves the Son of God afresh, and to

put him to an open shame? I know you cannot but all blame Judas for betraying, Pilate for condemning, and the Jews for crucifying your blessed Saviour. But what? will you act the same tragedy over again, and do that yourselves, which you so justly abhor in them? Oh! that this might not be said of any one here present.

But that you would all for the future be revenged of your sins, for the miseries they brought upon your Saviour, and serve them as they served him, even *crucify the flesh with its affections and lusts*, and give up yourselves to him who gave himself for you, on purpose that he might *redeem you from all iniquity, and purify you to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*. That this may be the happy effect of your meeting together upon this sad and solemn occasion, give me leave to conclude with this brief exhortation to you.

Men, brethren, and fathers,

We have this day been looking upon *him whom we have pierced*, and, I hope, *mourning for him*; we have considered how much the eternal Son of God hath suffered in our natures, that we might not suffer in our own persons unto all eternity; how he became not only a man, but *a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, destitute, afflicted, tormented, crucified*, and all to satisfy God's justice for our sins, and to purchase for us all things necessary to make us happy. Now therefore that you have heard so much of what the Son of God hath suffered for your sakes, you cannot surely but look upon yourselves as highly obliged to do all you can for his sake.

In his name therefore, and for his sake, I beseech you all, *by his agony and bloody sweat, by his cross and passion, by his death and burial*, that you would dote no longer upon the toys and trifles of this lower world, but love, honour, and prefer him your Saviour before all things in it. For his sake, I beseech you to deny yourselves, take up your cross, and follow him, avoiding whatsoever you know to be forbidden, and

doing whatsoever is commanded by him. For his sake, I beseech you, *let your light so shine before men, that others may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.* For his sake I beseech you to be constant in your devotions to God, stedfast in the profession of your faith, and zealous for that religion which he hath prescribed and settled amongst you. For his sake I beseech you to be sober and temperate in the use of his creatures, free and liberal in your contributions to his poor members, just and righteous in all your dealings; in short, I beseech you all, for Christ Jesus's sake, to live continually in the true faith and fear of Almighty God, in humble obedience to the king, and to all that are in authority under him, in brotherly love and charity to one another; and when you have done all, put your full trust and confidence in him, and him alone, both for the pardon of your sins, and for the acceptance of your persons and performances before God.

Do but all this for his sake, and then I dare assure you, you will soon find the fruit and efficacy of his death and passion for you; for then he will be your Advocate in heaven, and plead your cause before his Father; he will take care that your sins be all pardoned, and your obligations to punishment cancelled and made void; he will supply you continually with the influences of his Holy Spirit, and with all things necessary both for life and godliness; he will carry you through all the *changes and chances of this mortal life*, so as to make them all conspire and work together for your good; he will defend you against all the attempts and contrivances both of men and devils, so that *the gates of hell* itself shall never be able to prevail against you; and at last, he will take you to himself, to live with him, to be kings and priests, and glorified saints in heaven; when all your mourning for him shall be turned into praises and adorations of him, and you will spend eternity itself in doing that, which I humbly desire you all to join with me in doing at this time, even in praising and magnify-

ing the eternal God our Saviour, of whom we have been now speaking, in the words of the holy Evangelist.

Unto him that loved us, and hath washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and the Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen.

S E R M O N L X V I .

A GOOD-FRIDAY SERMON.

JOHN xix. 30.

And he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.

WHENSOEVER we commemorate the death of Christ, as we do this day, we ought at the same time to remember also the sins that caused it. And not only the sins of mankind in general, but ours likewise in particular ; the sins which we all know, every one himself, to have been guilty of, and the condition they have brought us all into ; for till this be done, we can never be duly affected as we ought with the consideration of what the Son of God hath suffered for us.

For this purpose therefore, let us first look back a little upon our former lives, and take a short review of what we have, and what we have not done ; what duties we have neglected, and what vices and wickedness we have committed since we came into the world. And if we do this with a single and impartial eye, we may easily perceive that our whole lives have been but as one continued sin against him in whom we live ; and all our thoughts, words, and actions, a plain contradiction to those holy, and wise, and righteous laws, which he that made us hath set before us ; we contracted that guilt by coming through the loins of our sinful parents, for which we might justly have been condemned to everlasting darkness, before we had ever seen the light of the sun. And yet, as if that had not been enough, as we were

born, so we have lived all along in sin. Our childhood and youth, at best, were spent in ignorance and vanity. And since we came to riper years, how little good, how much evil have we done? What place, what company, or what condition were we ever in, wherein we carried ourselves so wisely and religiously as we ought? What spiritual duty, or civil employment, did we ever set about, but we failed some way or other in the performance of it? Which of us have answered the end of our creation? We were all created to serve and honour our Creator; which of us have done it as we ought? But instead of that, how have we all broken his laws, abused his mercies, slighted his judgments, mistrusted his promises, despised his threatenings, and so dishonoured his sacred and most glorious name through the whole course of our lives.

I need not descend to particulars; you cannot but all know, every one, the plague of his own heart, and the several miscarriages of his own life, which, in the best of us, are so many and great, that the remembrance of them must needs be grievous to us, and the burden so intolerable, that it is a wonder that we are able to bear it, as considering whom we have offended, and what we have deserved by them. By our sins we have offended the almighty Creator and Governor of the world; for his law being, like himself, pure, and holy, and perfect, every transgression of it is not only an affront to his majesty, but a repugnancy to his very nature, and therefore must needs be offensive and displeasing to him. Hence it is that he hath expressed so much anger against all sinners, such as we have all been. Which, if duly considered, is of itself sufficient to make our hearts even sink within us; that he that made and maintains us, should be angry with us; that wisdom, glory, power, justice, yea, goodness, and love, and mercy itself, should be displeased at us, who can think of it without horror and amazement? especially if we consider withal, the sad effects of this divine displeasure

and vengeance, which we have deserved, and may justly expect to be executed upon us. Shame, and pain, and grief, and poverty, and sickness, and temporal death, these are the least, and but the beginnings of them ; for over and above these, we are liable every moment to be cast down headlong into the bottomless pit of hell, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched*, Mark ix. 44. that is, where men's consciences are perpetually gnawed and tormented with the remembrance of their former sins and follies, and the fire of God's wrath is always burning in their breasts, never to be quenched or abated. This we have all deserved a thousand times over by our sins, and therefore cannot but look upon ourselves, at this time, as so many guilty malefactors here assembled before the Judge of heaven and earth, who may justly condemn us when he pleaseth to these our deserved torments ; we lie perfectly at his mercy ; and yet we have no ground in the world to hope for any at his righteous hands, unless there be some way or other found out whereby his wrath may be appeased, and his justice satisfied for the dishonour we have done him, by the sins that we have committed against him.

This therefore is the work, the great work, which the Son of God himself undertook, and as upon this day accomplished for us, when, as it is here said, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*. Which that we may rightly understand, we shall consider three things.

I. Who the person here spoken of was, who thus undertook to make atonement and satisfaction for our sins.

II. What he did for the accomplishment of it, *he gave up the ghost*.

III. How we come to be so far interested in what he then did, as to obtain pardon and salvation by it.

First, As to the person, he is here called *JESUS*, that is, a Saviour ; which name was given him before he was conceived in the womb, upon this very account, be-

cause *he was to save his people from their sins*, Matt. i. 21. But to know what kind of person this was and is, so as to frame a right idea of him in our minds, we must take notice of three things especially in him, which, if we consult the oracles of God without prejudice, we may easily find to be so peculiar to him, that they all three never did, nor can meet together in any other person in the world, but only in him.

1. That he was the only-begotten Son of God, begotten from eternity, of the essence or substance of the Father, and therefore of the same essence or substance with him. The second Person in the most blessed Trinity ; really and truly God, coequal, consubstantial, coeternal with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one and the same God with them.

2. That in the *fulness of time* he became man also, born of a woman, and therefore of the same nature and substance with the rest of mankind, consisting of such a soul and such a body as other men have.

3. That as he was both God and man, so he was not, nor is, one person as God, and another person as man, but one and the same person both as God and man. The human nature which he assumed having no subsistence out of his divine person, but at his first conception was so united to it, as to make but one person with it. *So that as the reasonable soul and body is one man, so God and man is one Christ*, as it is expressed in the Athanasian Creed.

If you ask how this could be done, that the infinite and immortal God should become also a finite and mortal man ? I answer, that we being fully assured by God himself that it is so, as we cannot question the possibility of it, so we ought not to be too curious in searching into the way and manner how it was effected. What is necessary for us to know concerning it, is as clearly, as so great a mystery could be, revealed to us in the answer which the angel Gabriel, at the same time when it was done, gave to the blessed Virgin, wonder-

ing how it was possible for her, who knew no man, to bear a son. *The Holy Ghost*, saith he, *shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy Thing which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God*, Luke i. 35. Where we may observe, that this great mystery was effected by the almighty power of God, the Holy Ghost himself coming in a wonderful manner upon the blessed Virgin, and so overshadowing her, as to cause her to conceive without the help of man, and at the same time uniting what was so conceived to the Son of God. And therefore what was then conceived, and afterwards born of that Virgin, is here called not an holy child, or an holy man, or person only, but τὸ ἅγιον, *the holy thing*; which plainly imports the whole composition, God and man in one person, according to that famous prophecy of Isaiah, *A virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*, Isa. vii. 14. *Immanuel*, that is, *God with us*, as the word signifies Θεάνθρωπος, God and man together.

But here we may further observe, that it is here said, that the Holy Ghost should come upon the Virgin, *and the power of the Highest should overshadow her: therefore also that holy Thing which should be born of her, should be called the Son of God*; which shews that he was the Son of God, not therefore only because as God he was begotten from eternity of the Father; but, therefore also, because as man he was conceived by the almighty power of God. So that as Adam was therefore called the Son of God, Luke iii. 38. because he was formed immediately by God himself out of the dust of the earth; so Christ is therefore also called the Son of God, because he was formed likewise by the immediate power of God out of the flesh of the Virgin. Neither is this the only thing wherein Adam and Christ agree: for besides their being both formed immediately by God himself; as Adam, when he was first formed, was not only one particular man, but all mankind was

contained in him ; and therefore he was not called by any particular name, but Adam, that is, man in general : so also Christ, he was not only one particular human person, but the human nature in general was united to his divine person, and therefore all mankind, as partaking of that nature, were as really contained in him, as they were in Adam. And hence it is that he also is called Adam by the apostle himself, saying, *The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. And the same apostle, Rom. v. shews at large, that Adam and Christ were equally the common heads and representatives of all mankind, that all might recover by the one, what they had lost by the other. And as by one man's disobedience *many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, ver. 19. And elsewhere he saith, *As in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 22. Which I therefore observe here, because it will give us great light, as we shall see presently, into that mysterious, as well as most wise and gracious method, which Christ took to expiate our sins, and to accomplish our salvation.

Which is the next thing to be considered, even how this divine Person having thus taken our nature upon him, made atonement and satisfaction to God for the sins of mankind, so as to put us again into a state of salvation ? I answer in general, he did it by laying down his life ; when, as it is said in my text, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost* ; then did he make full and complete satisfaction to God for the sins of mankind. But for our better understanding of this, before we come to speak of his death, it will be necessary to look back a little upon his life, and consider what he had done before in order to it.

For this purpose therefore we may observe, that Christ, after he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin Mary, lived about thirty years as it were *incognito* in the world, being looked upon all that

while as no more than a private person. But then being baptized and consecrated to it by the Holy Ghost descending visibly upon him, he publicly entered upon his office, and set upon the work he came to do, even to save mankind. And from that time forward, whatsoever he spake, or did, or suffered, was doubtless some way or other in order to that end. His words were all as so many oracles, uttered by God himself, to direct and instruct mankind what to believe and do, that they might be saved. And as never man spake as he spake, so never man did as he did. For he went about continually doing good, and dispersing his miraculous charity among the people; whereby he did not only cure their bodies, but their souls too, by convincing them that he was their Saviour, and so confirming their faith in him, without which they could never be saved by him.

But at the same time that he began publicly to do good, he began likewise to suffer evil. Not that he had deserved any himself; for as he was conceived and born, so he lived and died, perfectly void of sin. And therefore all his sufferings, from first to last, could be for no other, but only for the sins of mankind, in whose nature he underwent them. And it is much to be observed, that whatsoever kind of punishment we have deserved for our sins, he suffered the same for our sakes, and in our stead. Have we deserved to be tempted and hurried about by the fiends of hell? He was no sooner baptized, but he was led into the wilderness, and there tempted by the devil, who from thence carried him to Jerusalem, and there set him upon a pinnacle of the temple, and then hurried him to the top of an exceeding high mountain, and all to prevail with him, if it had been possible, to sin against God. Have we deserved hunger, and thirst, and weariness? He, at the same time, fasted *forty days and forty nights, and was afterwards hungry*, Matt. iv. 2. And at another time was weary with his journey, and so thirsty, that he desired a woman

of Samaria to give him a little water to drink, John iv. 6, 7. Have we deserved to live in penury and want of all things? He had not so much as an house to put his head in, Matt. viii. 20. nor money enough to pay his tribute, without working a miracle, chap. xviii. 27. nor victuals, but what he was beholden to some good women for, who ministered to him of their substance, Luke viii. 3. Have we deserved shame, reproach, and ignominy? Never did man bear so much of that as our Lord did for our sakes! He was despised and rejected of men. He was reproached for being mad, and for dealing with the devil. He was called a *Samaritan*, a *glutton*, a *wine-bibber*, a *friend of publicans and sinners*. He was made the derision and laughing-stock of the rabble. He was stripped, and then clothed with scarlet. He had thorns put upon his head for a crown, and a reed into his hand for a sceptre. He was mocked; he was spit upon; he was smitten upon the head. He was haled from one judge to another, and at last was hanged upon a cross between two notorious malefactors, Matt. xxvii.

Have we deserved grief and sorrow of heart? He was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He wept, he was grieved, his soul was exceeding sorrowful even unto death, Matt. xxvi. 38. Have we deserved pain and torment in our bodies? He was in that pain and torment, that he sweat great drops of blood, which fell down from his blessed body to the ground, Luke xxii. 44. Have we deserved to be forsaken of all our friends? He was forsaken of all his disciples, and betrayed too by one of them. Have we deserved to be accused, arraigned, condemned for our sins? He was accused; he was arraigned; he was condemned for them. In a word, have we deserved death? He hath suffered it, even the death upon the cross.

And now we have brought our Lord unto the cross, let us dwell a little upon the contemplation of what he did, and what he suffered all the while he was upon it, which was three long hours together. One remarkable

thing he did upon the cross was, that he prayed for those who nailed him to it, that God would pardon that very sin they committed in it, saying, *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do*, Luke xxiii. 34. He extenuates their crime as much as possible, by imputing it to their ignorance; but it being a sin never to be pardoned without him, he himself prays for the pardon of it. Whereby he hath not only taught us, by his example as well as precept, to love and pray for our very enemies, but hath certified us withal, that it is only by his merits and mediation for us that our sins can be forgiven. After this, seeing his mother standing by, he committed her to the care of his beloved disciple, John xix. 26, 27. and so hath left us a great example of that care and honour that children ought to have for their parents, not only while they live, but when they die. Then he converted one of the thieves, to shew that conversion comes from him.

These things he did upon the cross; but who is able to express what he suffered all the while he was upon it? He being fastened to it with nails drove through his hands and feet, the most nervous parts of his pure and vigorous body, the pain of his body could not but be the most exquisite and acute that it was possible for any one to bear. And yet that was nothing in comparison of what he suffered in his soul, which was so overwhelmed with the sense and horror of the sins for which he suffered, that he cried out as if he had been forsaken by God himself, *Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* And now his soul was made an offering for sin; a whole burnt-offering; wherefore being all in a flame, and knowing also that all things which the prophets had foretold should be done unto him before his death were now accomplished, but only that one, *they gave me gall for my meat, and in my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink*, Psal. lxix. 21 that this also might be fulfilled, he said, *I thirst*: upon which some that stood by

having filled a sponge with vinegar mixed with gall, they put it upon a stalk of hyssop, and so reached it up to his mouth, which when he had received, he said, *It is finished*; that is, all that was necessary for me to do for the salvation of mankind before my death, is now finished; so that I have nothing else to do but to die. And having said this, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost.*

His hands and feet being nailed to the cross, he could not bow his whole body, but his head being loose, he bowed that, and so worshipped and adored Almighty God his Father in the most solemn manner that he could, which plainly shews the extreme ignorance, or rather impudence, of those who deride and condemn this ancient and natural way of worshipping God by bowing our heads or bodies towards him; as if it were a mere superstitious rite and ceremony. For here we see our Lord himself did it; yea, it was the last act he did in his whole life; and therefore it is strange to me, how any who pretend to be his disciples, should either neglect it themselves, or blame others for doing what their Master did. But because it is here said only that *he bowed his head*, we must not think that he performed only bodily worship; for, as St. John here saith, *he bowed his head, and gave up the ghost*: St. Luke says, that he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*; and having said thus, *he gave up the ghost*, Luke xxiii. 46. From whence it appears, that at the same time that *he bowed his head*, he said, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*, and so worshipped him both in body and spirit too.

And having done this, he immediately gave up the ghost, *παρέδωκε τὸ πνεῦμα*, he delivered it up accordingly into the hands of his Father; which shews, that his soul was not forced from his body by the violence of pain, but he breathed it out of his own accord, as the fathers frequently observe: agreeably to what he himself saith, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because*

I lay down my life, that I might take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; John x. 18. And that he did so, appears likewise from his crying with so loud a voice immediately before his expiring, as the Evangelists agree he did, when he uttered these words, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.* For if his body had been so weak, as not to be able to contain his soul any longer, he could not have spoke at all, much less so strongly as he did. And therefore his speaking so loud at the same time that he breathed out his soul, clearly argues, that he might have kept it longer if he had pleased, and, by consequence, that he gave up the ghost then voluntarily and of his own accord. Insomuch that the centurion, who stood by and heard it, could not but from thence conclude, that he was indeed the Son of God, Mark xv. 39. in that he did not die as others do, by having their souls forced from their bodies, but by sending it forth himself before the time that it would otherwise have departed; as it is plain also that he did, in that he died before the two thieves that were crucified with him; for the soldiers were forced to break their legs to dispatch them, but they did not break his, because they saw that he was dead already, John xix. 33. But his body being so clear and strong, as before it was, could not but have held out longer than theirs, according to the ordinary course of nature. And therefore his dying before them plainly demonstrates that it was his own voluntary act; and that to make his sacrifice more acceptable and satisfactory for the sins of mankind, he offered up himself as a free-will offering to his Father for them.

But some perhaps may say, what necessity was there that he should give up the ghost? Had not he suffered enough before to expiate our sins, but he must needs die too? I answer, it is true, that he being God as well as man, all his sufferings were of infinite value. But, however, it was as necessary that he should suffer death, as any other punishment that we have deserved; as you

may easily see, if you will but cast your eye a little upon the first establishment of the Gospel in paradise, which in short was this : God said to Adam the same day he was created, *Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat ; for in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, Gen. ii. 17 Adam notwithstanding did eat thereof ; and therefore God, who cannot lie, having said it, it was necessary both that he should die, and that he should die that very day wherein he did it. But see here the infinite wisdom and love of God, who found out a way to make his word good, and yet save man from death. For Adam at that time was not the only, but all the men in the world, all mankind being then in him, the whole nature and species of man ; for which cause, as I observed before, he had no particular name given him, but was called *Adam*, man in general. Hence therefore the death that was threatened in case of disobedience, was not threatened to him as a single or particular person, but to the whole nature of man contained in him ; which, therefore, according to that threatening, must have died that very day, so as that there never would have been another man upon earth but only the first, and he would not have continued a whole day upon it. To prevent which, God was pleased immediately, in the cool of the same day, to unite, by promise, the said nature of man to the person of his own Son, and there to inflict that death upon it, which he had before threatened against it. For he then promised that the seed of the woman should break the serpent's head, and the serpent should bruise his heel, Gen. iii. 15. In which few words are couched all the great mysteries of the Gospel. Christ's conception by the Holy Ghost of the seed of the woman, without the help of man. His conquest over satan ; he shall break the serpent's head ; that is, he shall destroy the works of the devil, and so rescue man from that sin and misery which the devil had brought him into : and then here is the way and manner how he shall do it, even by his

passion and resurrection, The serpent shall bruise his heel, that is, shall put his lower part, his human nature to death, but he shall bruise only one heel, and therefore the other being still whole, he shall rise again. This is that *πρωτευαγγέλιον*, the first Gospel that was published to the world, which although it may seem something obscure to us now, yet Adam doubtless understood it as clearly as we do that which is written by the Evangelists.

Now this promise being made the same day that Adam fell, Christ was looked upon as existing at the same time, because what God saith shall be, is as certain as if it already was. And hence it is that the apostle calls Christ the second man, 1 Cor. xv. 47 *The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.* Because when he was first promised, and so constituted our Saviour, there was never another man in the world, but only the first Adam and he. Hence also it is that he is called, *The Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xiii. 8. because the virtue and efficacy of his death commenced from the time that God had first promised that he should die, when he said the serpent should bruise his heel. Hence also he is said to be a *propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. because the sacrifice which he offered looked backward as well as forward, so as to respect the sins of all mankind, from the first man that was made, to the last that shall be born upon earth. Hence, lastly, it appears, that that threatening, *in the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*, was punctually fulfilled; for though Adam's person, to which it was made, lived above nine hundred years after, yet his nature, or the nature of man in general, for which it was intended, died in effect that very day, in the person of the Son of God.

From these things thus briefly premised, it is easy to observe, not only that it was necessary that Christ should die, but likewise that his death was of the same extent and latitude with that which was threatened to Adam;

which implied not only the separation of the soul from the body, but likewise all manner of pain and misery, temporal, spiritual, or eternal, that our nature is capable of. Christ's death was equivalent to them all : inso-much, that if mankind had never committed any other sin, but only that of eating the forbidden fruit, no man would have ever suffered any punishment or misery at all, but only Christ. And therefore children, who have no other guilt upon them but that of Adam, if they are baptized, and so have the merits of Christ applied to them, and then die without committing any actual sin, are undoubtedly saved, as the church always believed.

But it is not so with others ; for mankind in general did not only contract guilt by eating the forbidden fruit, but our very nature was poisoned and corrupted with it, and hath been inclined to sin and wickedness ever since ; insomuch, that so soon as ever men are capable of doing any thing, they are still prone to do something they ought not to do, and to leave something undone which they ought to do ; whereby it comes to pass, that, as the Wise-man saith, *there is not a just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. But every sin deserveth death as well as the first, and was implicitly threatened with it at the same time. And therefore, unless Christ's death had respect to all other sins as well as that, we are still but where we were, liable every moment to death and destruction.

But there is no fear of that ; no doubt but there is as much virtue in Christ's cross, that tree of life, to heal us, as there was venom in the tree of knowledge of good and evil to infect us : for he, the second Adam, was set up on purpose to suffer all the evil that was deserved, and to restore all the good that was lost by the first, both to himself and his posterity. The first Adam incensed God against us ; the second hath reconciled him to us. The first corrupted our nature ; the second sanctified it, by taking it into his own person. By the first we were made sinners ; by the second we are made

righteous. The first hath forfeited all our happiness ; the second hath purchased it for us again. The first made us subject to the curse of the law ; the second redeemed us from it. By reason of the first, we all die ; by virtue of the second, we shall all be raised up to life. In short, by the fall of Adam we are all guilty of many actual transgressions ; but by the death of Christ we are absolved and discharged from them ; that being a sufficient satisfaction to God, not only for the first, but for all the sins that were occasioned by it ; that is, for the sins of the whole world, and of every man that is in it ; for it is said, that *Christ tasted death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. And therefore every man must needs be concerned in his death, so as to be capable of obtaining pardon for it.

And the reason is, because Christ suffered in that nature which every man is of. And therefore every man must needs be entitled to the merits of these sufferings. But these sufferings are of infinite merit, because the person that suffered was infinite. So that now every man has infinite merits in Christ to make atonement for his sins, and to purchase pardon and salvation for him ; and by consequence, if any man miss of it, he cannot impute it to any insufficiency in Christ's merits and power to save him, but he must ascribe it wholly to his own neglect, in not performing the conditions required in the Gospel, whereby to apply to his own person the merits of those sufferings which Christ underwent in his nature before, and when he gave up the ghost ; for he that doth this, can no more fail of salvation, than Christ can fail to be a Saviour.

Which brings me to the last question I promised to consider, even how we come to be interested in what Christ hath done and suffered, so as to obtain pardon and salvation by it ? A question, the propounding whereof transports my soul into ecstasies of joy, and praise, and thanks to God, for that the thing itself is possible : that it is possible for us to obtain pardon and

salvation by what Christ hath done and suffered for us ; without him be sure it is as impossible for us to obtain either, as it is for God to lie. Whereas by him our sins may be as certainly pardoned, as ever they were committed ; and our souls as easily saved, as we can in reason wish they should be ; for, blessed be his great name for it, we have a Saviour *who is able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by him*, Heb. vii.

21 A Saviour, who being God as well as man, is of infinite power, and therefore can do what he will ; and of infinite love and pity, and therefore will do what he can for us. A Saviour, who being man also as well as God, is perfectly acquainted with our temper, and touched with the feeling of our infirmities, and therefore perfectly knows both what we want, and how to help us. A Saviour, who being both God and man in one and the same person, the most exactly qualified both to suffer and to satisfy for our sins, and so to reconcile both God to us, and us to God. A Saviour, who, as man, is always in heaven, there making intercession for us ; and, as God, is always upon earth too, every where present with us, and so, as God-man, is at all times, and in all places, both able and ready to assist, defend, and comfort. In a word, we have a Saviour, who once died to purchase pardon and salvation for us, and ever lives to apply it to us.

But now the question is, how he doth that ? and what he requires on our parts in order to it ? Which being a question concerning what our Saviour himself doth, and what all they must do who desire to be saved by him, I shall not undertake to determine it of mine own head, but shall consult him about it, who best knows after what manner, and upon what terms, we come to be actually possessed of the purchase he hath made for us, which having cost him so dear as it did, no less than his own blood ; as we cannot imagine that he should require more of us than what is absolutely necessary to our being vested in it, so we may be confident that he would

take care to leave us such instructions about it, whereby we may easily understand what he would have us to do in order to it.

And indeed this he hath done abundantly in his holy Gospel, where his divine sayings are recorded, on purpose that mankind may always know from his own mouth what to do in this case. Now, if we look into this Gospel, we shall find these and such like expressions oftⁿ coming from him: *For God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. And again, *He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him*, ver. 36. And elsewhere, *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth in me should not abide in darkness*, John xii. 46. And, *I am the resurrection and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die*, John xi. 25, 26. And in the very last words he spake to his apostles before he left them, he said, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 15, 16.

If we run over all the writings of the evangelists, we shall meet with nothing more frequently proceeding from our Saviour's mouth, than such sayings as these; whereby he plainly gives us to understand, that the great thing that he requires of us, in order to our being interested in the merits of his death, for our pardon and salvation, is, to believe in him; not only to believe him, and what he said to be true, but to believe in him as our Saviour, so as to put our whole trust and confidence in him, and in him alone, both for our salvation itself, and for all things necessary in order to it.

Now, as no man can be saved unless his sins be first pardoned, so no man's sins can be pardoned until he

hath first repented of them. And therefore, that we may be saved by Christ, we must believe and trust on him, both for grace to repent, that so our sins may be pardoned, and also for the pardon of our sins when we have so repented; for both these things are wholly at his disposal, whom *God hath exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31. And therefore he himself, immediately before his ascension, said, *that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations*, Luke xxiv. 47. Still repentance first, and then remission.

The first thing therefore, which we ought to believe and trust in Christ our Saviour for, is, that he will save us from our sins; that he, or, which is all one, God for his sake, will give us grace to repent and forsake our former sins, and to walk for the future in newness of life. And verily we have all the reason in the world to trust in Christ for this, this being the great end of his incarnation, passion, resurrection, ascension, and intercession for us, as the Scriptures testify, 1 John iii. 8. Eph. v. 25, 26. Tit. ii. 14. 1 Pet. i. 19. Acts iii. 26. Eph. iv. 7, 8. and what he designed in his gracious undertaking for us, we cannot question but he is able and willing to accomplish in us. He sanctified our human nature in general, by uniting it to his divine Person; and he sanctifies our human person in particular, by making us partakers of his divine nature, which he communicates to us by dispersing his Holy Spirit from himself, the Head, into all the sound members of his body, that is, to all that truly believe in him. And therefore he himself saith, *He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without me ye can do nothing*, John xv. 5. From whence it is plain and evident, both that we can do nothing without him, and that there is nothing but we can do by him; as St. Paul found by his own experience, when he said, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*,

Phil. iv. 13. And if we do but believe in him, as St. Paul did, we also shall receive the same strength from him as St. Paul had, so as to be able to do all things by him. By him we can resist the devil, and make him fly from us; and not only withstand, but conquer all temptations. By him we can crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts, so as to suffer no sin to reign any longer in our mortal bodies, that we should obey it in the lusts thereof. By him we can overcome the world, so as to live above it, even whilst we are in it. By him we can be contented in all conditions, and rest fully satisfied with whatsoever happens to us. By him we can fast and pray, and read and hear, and receive his mystical body and blood to his glory and our own comfort. By him we can feed the hungry, clothe the naked, instruct the ignorant, support the weak, relieve the oppressed, and do good to all men, out of pure obedience to his commands. By him we can be meek, and patient, and humble, and sober, and just in all our ways. By him we can have our conversations always in heaven, and our hearts there, where our treasure is, where he our Saviour is, where our portion and estate lies. By him we can love, and fear, and honour, and obey, and serve God with all our hearts and souls, with all our might and mind. In short, by him we can be *holy, as he who hath called us is holy, in all manner of conversation*; for he is the fountain of all goodness, and therefore by him we may be, and by him we may do good all our days, if we will but believe and trust on him to enable us. For that is the means which he himself hath appointed, whereby to derive grace and virtue from him, to sanctify both our hearts and lives; for he himself saith, that *we are sanctified by faith that is in him*, Acts xxvi. 18. So that as none can be sanctified by him, except they believe in him, none can truly believe in him, but they are certainly sanctified by him: at least so far, as that by his assistance they shall sincerely perform whatsoever is required of them; and whatsoever they so

perform, shall by his merits and mediation be as acceptable to God as if it was absolutely perfect ; for all true believers are, as St. Peter saith, *an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ*, 1 Pet. ii. 5.

Now when we have thus, by a quick and lively faith, obtained grace and power from Christ to repent, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, then we may and ought to believe and trust on him likewise for the pardon of all our sins, for his sake, *in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*, Col. i. 14. Eph. i. 7 It was for this that he shed his blood, that he gave up the ghost and died. By which one oblation of himself once offered, he hath made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world. And if for the sins of the world, then for mine among the rest. And if I believe in him, as St. Paul did, I may say as he said, *that Christ so loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. iii. 20. for me in particular, so as to satisfy God's justice for my sins. And so all that rightly believe and trust on him for it, do thereby apply and appropriate all the merits of Christ's sufferings in their human nature, to their own particular human persons ; whereby all their obligations to punishment are cancelled and made void ; and how many, how great soever their sins have been, they are all pardoned and done away, so that they shall neither rise up to shame them in this, nor to condemn them in the world to come. They shall be, in this respect, as if they had never been ; Christ has taken them all away by suffering whatsoever was due to God's justice for them. So that Almighty God is no longer angry with us, but is reconciled to us, and receives us into his grace and favour again, and is as well pleased with us as if he had never been offended at us ; and all for the sake of his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased, with all that repent and believe in him. And if our sins be thus pardoned, and our persons justified

before God by the merits and mediation of his Son, it follows in course that our souls shall be saved by him ; for as the apostle saith, *Whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. viii. 30.

Thus therefore it is that we may be all interested in all the merits of Christ's death, even by faith, which, as the apostle saith, *is the substance of things hoped for*, causing them to subsist in us, and so putting us into the actual possession of all those glorious things which God hath promised, and we therefore hope for, upon the account of what his only Son hath done and suffered for us. By this we may all regain what we lost by the sin of our first parents, or our own. By this our lusts may be all subdued, our hearts cleansed, and our whole man sanctified in soul, body, and spirit. By this our sins may be all pardoned, our punishment remitted, and our persons justified before God. By this our duty, though imperfect, may be accepted, and our souls eternally saved. In short, by this all we who are here assembled may as certainly be glorified saints hereafter in heaven, as we are now miserable sinners upon earth. And if any of us be not, the fault will be wholly our own ; for we have all the reason and encouragement imaginable to believe and put our whole trust and confidence in our blessed Saviour for all things necessary to make us holy here, and happy for ever. For we have all the miracles that he ever wrought to confirm us in it ; we have the examples and experiences of his apostles, martyrs, confessors, and all the saints that ever lived, to assure us of it ; and above all, we have the word, the promises, the oath of God, of truth itself, for it. So that we have more ground to believe in Christ for grace and pardon, and eternal salvation, than we have to believe what we see, or hear, or understand ; for our senses may deceive us, and so may our reason too ; but God is of that infinite wisdom that he cannot be deceived himself, and of that infinite goodness, that he cannot deceive us.

Nevertheless what saith our blessed Lord? *When the Son of man cometh, shall he find faith upon earth?* I fear, if he should come now, he would not find much. Nothing, I know, is more common than to talk of faith, and pretend to it; but nothing, I doubt, is more rare than to have such a faith as the Gospel requires, and we have now been speaking of. Such a faith, as unites our soul to Christ, and fixes our hearts and minds upon him. Such a faith, as continually derives power and virtue from him to work by love. Such a faith, whereby *we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen*, and so live by faith, and not by sight. Such a faith as overcomes the world, purifies our hearts, and adorns our lives with all manner of good works. This is the faith that lays hold upon the merits of Christ's death, and applies them to us for the pardon of our sins and the salvation of our souls. And therefore thus it is that we must believe in Christ, as ever we desire to be saved by him.

Which therefore that we may do, we must be sure to make use of those means which God hath appointed for it; we must converse much with the word of God, the object of our faith; for, as St. Paul saith, *faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. x. 17. We must earnestly pray to Almighty God to give us faith; for, as the apostle saith, *faith is the gift of God*, Eph. ii. 8.

We must be very constant and serious both at our public and private devotions, wherein as we exercise our faith in Christ, he ordinarily increaseth and strengtheneth it. We must often receive the sacrament of our Lord's supper, instituted on purpose to put us in mind of his death, and to confirm our faith in it. We must keep the blood of Christ always fresh in our minds and memories, and take all occasions we can to ruminate upon it; especially at such times as the church hath set apart for that purpose; as all the Fridays in the year,

except Christmas-day, are to be observed as days of fasting and abstinence, only upon that account, because it was upon that day that Christ suffered. And therefore, as the very observing of that day should put us in mind of his sufferings; so they that would observe it aright should spend at least a good part of it in contemplating upon them, and acting their faith in them, for the pardon of those sins for which he suffered. The same should be the subject of our meditations all the Lent, especially this the last week of it, wherein the church hath ordered the history of our Saviour's passion to be read every day, that so we may daily exercise our faith in him. But, above all, this day is consecrated wholly and solely to the memory of Christ's death, that so we may repent of the sins for which he suffered it, and act our faith and trust on him for the pardon of them. This is the proper work of this day, and therefore let us now set about it in good earnest, thinking thus with ourselves:

Oh! the breadth, the length, the depth, the height of the love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord! Who is able to comprehend it! Who can but admire and adore it! That ever the almighty Creator of the world should have so much love and pity for us his sinful creatures upon earth, as to send his only-begotten Son to die, to die upon the cross, and all for us and for our sins against himself! Ungrateful wretches that we are, that ever we should commit such sins against him, which nothing less than the blood of his beloved Son could expiate! *Oh that our heads were waters, and our eyes a fountain of tears, that we might weep day and night,* and this day especially, that ever we should be the occasion that the Son of God should die! But wherefore did he die? to save sinners? Then he died to save us, the chiefest of all sinners. Why then should we despair of salvation, who have got such an all-sufficient Saviour as this is? one who is able to save to the utmost all

that come to God by him. By him therefore we will go to God; we will believe in him, we will put our whole trust and confidence on him, both to be cleansed from our sins, and justified before God by him.

O blessed Jesu! who once, as upon this day, sufferedst death upon the cross, and art now at the right hand of the Father in heaven, interceding for us, our eyes are up to thee, all our hopes and expectations are from thee. Send down thy Holy Spirit, we beseech thee, into our hearts, to work in us true repentance, to open our eyes, *to turn us from darkness to light, and from the power of satan unto God.* Blessed Lord our Saviour, we know thou hearest us, and believe thou wilt, according to thy promise, grant our request; thou wilt give us thy Holy Spirit, whereby we shall mortify the deeds of the flesh, and walk for the future in all thy commandments blameless. *We can now do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us.*

And now, what if our former sins were many? what if they were great? God knows they are so. But he knows also that his own Son hath died for them; for whose sake therefore he is now reconciled to us; why then should we despond? what need we fear? what can men or devils do against us? what evil can befall us? what good thing can be withholden from us? For, as it is written, Rom. viii. *if God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not but with him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that*

loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord : to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory. Amen.

S E R M O N L X V I I .

A GOOD-FRIDAY SERMON.

PHIL. ii. 8.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

HE that reads, and firmly believes what is here written, cannot but fall down and worship God, adoring that infinite wisdom, justice, and mercy, that he manifested in the redemption of fallen man ; for here we read, that our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, being in the form, subsisting in the nature or essence of God, *thought it not robbery to be equal with God.* He did not think that he robbed God of any glory, or offered him any injury or affront, by asserting himself to be equal to him, of the same substance, wisdom, power, and all other perfections with him. Yet nevertheless, this glorious, eternal, infinite, almighty Person, subsisting thus in the form of God, made himself of no reputation : he emptied, debased, humbled himself, by taking upon him the form of a servant ; being made in the likeness of men, a real and perfect man, like to the rest of mankind in all the integral or essential parts of a man. And being thus found in fashion or habit as a man, in such a soul and body as other men have, he humbled himself lower yet, becoming obedient, or subject to those laws, which he, as Lord of all, had made for others, not only all his life, but even to death itself ; and that too, not any ordi-

nary or common death, but the most painful, the most shameful, the most accursed death that any mortal could undergo, even *the death of the cross*.

Oh mystery of mysteries ! that God himself should become man, and die, and die upon the cross too ! Who can think of it without astonishment and admiration ! especially if we consider withal the ends and reasons of it, which are altogether as great and mysterious as the thing itself. Certainly, if we do that, we shall need no other arguments to persuade us to join with the catholic church in the celebration of it, as we do this day.

This therefore is that which I shall now offer at, even to consider the great ends and reasons why this divine Person, subsisting in the form or nature of God, took upon him the form or nature of man, and so died. Not that I think it possible for me fully to comprehend, much less to explain so great a mystery, which I can no sooner cast my eye upon, but it is immediately dazzled with the glory and splendor of it. Howsoever, it being a matter wherein we are all so highly concerned, and having it delivered to us in the holy Scriptures, in as plain and perspicuous terms as the nature of the thing would bear, I shall from thence endeavour to express my thoughts of it as clearly as I can ; humbly beseeching him of whom I speak so to assist and direct me in speaking of him, that I may utter nothing but what is agreeable to his word, and becoming his honour and majesty.

First therefore, we may consider, that although the most high God be infinitely happy in himself, yet he made all things for himself, even for his own glory, which is the ultimate end of this, and of all his other actions. Wherefore, when he made the world, he made two sorts of creatures in it capable of reflecting upon, and acknowledging those glorious perfections which he displayed in the creation of it ; and they were angels and men. All which he made not only rational and free

agents, and so able to do the work they were made for ; but likewise of such a temper and constitution, that their only ease and happiness consisted in the doing of it.

The first of these, viz. the angels, being all made, and actually existing together, although most of them continued in the same state in which they were created ; yet others fell from it, degenerating into wicked and impure spirits, which, not answering the end of their creation, are always uneasy, and restless in their minds, and tormented with the sense of their sin, and of the wrath of their almighty Creator against them for it.

But as for men, it was not so with them ; for they never did, nor ever will, till the end of the world, all actually exist together. But at first, only one man was made, and endued with power to propagate his kind to others, and so successively, till the whole number of individuals, or persons that God designed of that nature, should be made up.

But howsoever, seeing all mankind were to proceed from, and so were virtually contained in the first man, who was therefore called Adam, that is, man in general ; hence if he had stood, all mankind must needs have stood with him ; but he falling, all fell with him into the same wretched and miserable estate with the devils or apostate angels before spoken of.

So that now of the two sorts of creatures which God made on purpose to know, worship, and enjoy him that made them ; a great part of the one, and all the other, were lost and undone as to all intents and purposes of their creation, and are become of themselves as sinful and miserable, as they were designed by God to be holy and happy for ever

And now there is occasion given for the manifesting two divine perfections, which otherwise could not have been exerted, even vindictive justice and mercy ; both which suppose sin and guilt ; for if none had ever sinned, none could ever have been justly punished, nor

would any have stood in need of mercy. For though God is good, and kind, and gracious, and bountiful to all his creatures, he could not properly be said to be merciful to any, but to such as have contracted guilt, and so deserved punishment at his hands, as many of the angels and all mankind had now done, and so were become proper objects either of his justice, or mercy, or both, as he should see good to exercise them.

Wherefore the apostate angels having all sinned, every one in his own person, God was pleased to execute his justice and vengeance upon them to the utmost extremity, having condemned them all to everlasting fire, which, as our Saviour tells us, *is prepared for the devil and his angels*, Matt. xxv. 41 And therefore St. Paul saith, that *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them into hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. And St. Jude, that *the angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude 6. So that not one of them can ever escape, but they are all made standing, everlasting monuments of the divine vengeance, and just indignation against sin, never to be appeased.

And the same might justly have been the condition of all mankind too; for they all sinned in their common head, and so fell from their first estate, as well as the apostate angels, and therefore have deserved the same punishment which was inflicted upon them. But howsoever, seeing they did not all actually consent in their own persons to the sin of their first parents, but only in their general nature, which was then contained wholly in them, hence their great and most gracious Creator was pleased to shew mercy towards them, but so as to manifest his justice also, both against that original, and all the actual sins they should ever be guilty of, so as to make them the objects both of his justice and of his mercy too; of his justice, by punishing the sins they

had committed ; and of his mercy, by pardoning those who had committed them, upon such easy terms, that if it be not their own personal faults, they may be all restored to the same estate of bliss and happiness from which they fell.

For this therefore it was that Christ came into the world, for this it was that he did and suffered so much when here, and for this it was that he died upon the cross, even for the exaltation of God's justice and mercy, and so for the advancing of his glory in the redemption of mankind from the state of sin and misery, into which they were fallen, to a state of grace and salvation.

Now we being all in the number of those to whom the great Creator of the world hath been thus infinitely merciful as well as just, it must needs behove us very much to understand and apprehend this great mystery aright, that so we may be duly affected with it, and thankful for it, and know what to do, that we may be really and eternally the better for it.

For which purpose, therefore, we may consider, first, that the person who undertook our redemption, was none of the creatures that God had made, but his only Son, whom he had begotten from eternity, by communicating his own essence to him, who is therefore said to subsist in the form or essence of God. He subsists in it, and so is a distinct person or subsistence in it ; but in that he subsists in it, he must needs be of it ; it being impossible that any thing should subsist in the essence of God, but what is of that essence. Hence he is truly and properly God of God, Light of light, very God of very God, begotten, not made, of one substance or essence with the Father, as the first general council determined out of the holy Scriptures, and the catholic church hath always held both before and since. Indeed there is no one truth more clearly revealed in the Gospel than this is. And it is but necessary it should be so : this being the very foundation of our religion, and of all our hopes of being saved in it : take away

this, and our redemption falls to the ground, as being built wholly upon the divine power and nature of our divine Redeemer. And therefore Turks and Socinians, and all such as deny the divinity of our Saviour, do thereby deny him to be our Saviour too, and so make themselves incapable of being ever saved by him. But, blessed be God, we have better learned Christ; being fully assured out of his holy word, that though he be a distinct person from the Father, he is the same God, of the same divine power and nature with him.

This divine person, therefore, subsisting in the form of God, having undertaken our redemption, for the effecting of it, took upon him the form of a servant, the nature of man, not of this or that particular man, but of man in general. So that the whole human nature which was contained in Adam, was now assumed by Christ, who is therefore called Adam too, that is, as I observed before, man in general. *The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit*, 1 Cor. xv. 45. Hence he is called also the *second man* by the same apostle, saying, *The first man was of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven*, ver. 47. Why the second man? But because he was looked upon as become man from the time that he was first promised, whereas there was never another man besides in the world, but only the first man Adam; and especially, because he was the next man in general after Adam. All other men betwixt them being only particular human persons, but Adam and Christ sustained the whole human nature. In which sense, as Adam was the first, Christ was properly second man. Neither is this a mere airy speculation, but so great, so necessary a truth, that our salvation depends very much upon it; for all mankind being contained, and therefore sinning in the first man Adam, unless there be another Adam or man in general found out, who hath borne the punishment of that sin, all mankind must still be subject to it: whereas there being

now another Adam set up, in whom the whole nature of man, and so all mankind, is contained, as well as in the first, by him we may be all freed from the sin we contracted, and so repair all the losses we sustained in the first Adam, and he made righteous by the one, as we were made sinners by the other: as the apostle proves at large, Rom. v.

But here we must farther observe, that the human nature which the Son of God assumed, having no subsistence out of the divine Person who assumed it, it could not make a person of itself distinct from the divine, but was so united to it, that although he had two distinct natures, the one divine, communicated to him by the Father from eternity; the other human, assumed by himself in time, and so was really both God and man; yet he was not one person as God, and another as man, but he was only one person both as God and man, as the third general council determined against Nestorius. And the same may be fully demonstrated, not only from many particular places in the holy Gospel, but likewise from the whole scope and design of it; for if he had been one person as God, and another person as man, then all his sufferings as man, being the sufferings only of a finite person, would have terminated in himself, and could never have reached the rest of mankind. Whatsoever he might have merited for himself, he could not have merited any thing for us by them, in that he underwent them only as a mere human person, such as every one of us is. So that by this means we should still be where we were, lost and undone forever. Whereas on the other side, Christ, both as God and man, being all one, and that a divine and infinite person, whatsoever he did or suffered in his human nature, it being done and suffered by an infinite person, it could not but be of infinite worth and value, and so be able to reach and profit all that should or could ever partake of that nature wherein it was done or suffered; for be they never so many, both they and their number

is still but finite ; whereas his merits could not but be like himself, infinite.

But this being the great article upon which the main stress of our salvation depends, it may not be amiss to confirm and explain it a little farther to you : for which purpose I might produce many of Christ's own sayings, and as many passages out of the writings of his holy apostles, which make it both certain and clear. But I shall instance only in those words of St. Paul to the Asian bishops, *Take heed therefore to yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood*, Acts xx. 28. where we find it expressly said, that God hath purchased the church with his own blood, which could not possibly be, unless the same person who was God, had blood wherewith to purchase it. But this blood could be no other but the blood of the human nature ; which, if it had been an human person, could not have been truly called, as it is here, the blood of God. But seeing the blood, which Christ shed as man, was most certainly what it was here called, even the blood of God, an infinite person, it could not but be of sufficient value to purchase the whole church, as it is here said to have done.

From hence therefore we may infallibly conclude, that although the two natures in Christ were preserved entire and distinct from one another, after as well as before their union to one person, as the fourth general council declared against Eutyches and his followers ; yet they were so united to one person, that whatsoever was done in either nature, was still done by one and the same person. And, by consequence, that whatsoever Christ either did or suffered as man, was done and suffered by one who was really and truly God : when Christ as man was derided, God was derided ; when he was sorrowful, God was sorrowful ; when he was crucified, it might be truly said that God was crucified ; for so the apostle himself speaks, saying, that *they crucified the*

Lord of glory, 1 Cor. ii. 8. which is the same in effect as if he had said, they crucified God.

If we carry these truths along with us, they will give us great light into the mystery of our salvation by Christ; for seeing he was really and truly God, of the same nature with the Father, and became really and truly man, of the same nature with us, so as to be still but one person both as God and man; hence it necessarily follows, that when he humbled himself, and became obedient, as it is here said, the obedience which he performed infinitely exceeded the most perfect obedience that all mankind could ever have performed, if they had continued in their first and best estate: for their obedience could have been no more than what was due to God, and at the highest it would have been the obedience only of finite creatures: whereas his was the obedience of God himself, which could not be properly said to be due to himself. And therefore it is here said, *that he humbled himself, by becoming obedient*, as the Greek words import; for he having no previous obligations upon him to observe those laws which he himself had prescribed to mankind, it was great humility and condescension in him to obey them. It is true, as man he was bound to obey God, as other men are. But no man ever was or could be bound to perform divine obedience, such as Christ performed in his manhood united to a divine Person, which was so exceeding great, such infinite obedience, that it could not but be of as great, as infinite value and merit for mankind, in whose nature he performed it.

Especially considering that he was obedient, not only through the whole course of his life, but, as the apostle here saith, *unto death*; unto death, not as the object, but the great and last subject of his obedience. God had said to the first Adam, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt die the death*: and the second Adam accordingly died the death, *even the death of the cross*, in which were contained all the shame, the pain, and curses

that were due to the sins of mankind ; which death being undergone by the whole nature of man in the person of God, and so by God himself, it was more in itself, and more satisfactory to the divine justice, than if all human persons in the world should have suffered eternal death ; for theirs could have been no more than the death of finite persons ; which, if it could ever satisfy divine justice, would not be eternal. But his being the death of an infinite person, it could not be but of infinite value, and therefore as much as justice itself could require for sins committed against a person that is infinite. And it being undergone in the nature of man, all the infinite value, merit, and satisfaction that is in it, must needs have respect or relation to those only, and to all those who partake of that nature. And therefore it is said, that *Christ tasted death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. That *he gave himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. That *he was a propitiation for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. that is, as our church expresseth it, *he, by his one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world, or of all mankind, in whose nature he did it.*

Now these things being considered, it is easy to see what grounds we have to hope for pardon and salvation by Christ ; for in order to the pardon of our sins, it was first necessary that God's law and justice should be satisfied for the injury and dishonour he hath received by them. But this Christ hath now done more effectually by dying in the human nature, than all human persons could have done by dying eternally. So that it will be no violation of his justice to pardon our sins, seeing his own Son hath undergone the punishment which was due unto him for them. Upon whose account, therefore, he is now ready to shew us so much mercy, as to discharge and acquit us of all our sins, and to receive us again into his grace and favour, upon our repentance and submission.

And seeing both reason and justice require that we should repent of our sins, and turn to God, before we be pardoned by him, Christ hath merited this also for us ; and therefore is now exalted by the right hand of God, *to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins*, Acts v. 31. first repentance, and then remission : so that now by reason of his infinite merits, he hath power not only to pardon our sins if we do repent, but to give us repentance also, that so they may be pardoned. Where, by repentance, we are to understand all manner of grace and power to do whatsoever is required of us in order to our pardon and salvation ; it is now all at Christ's disposal. Inso-much that as he himself tells us, *without him we can do nothing*, John xv. 5. But, as his apostle saith, *I can do all things through Christ that strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13.

But notwithstanding the continual supplies of grace and virtue from Christ, whereby we are sanctified or made sincerely holy ; yet by reason of the remainder of sins in us, neither our persons nor our actions are perfectly righteous, and, by consequence, not acceptable in themselves to God. But this also our blessed Saviour hath taken care of, making up the defects and imperfections both of our persons and duties, with that most perfect and divine obedience which he performed in our natures. By which means we may be justified, or accepted of, and accounted as righteous before God, as if we were exactly so in ourselves : so that, *as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners ; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 19.

But many, you may say, why not all ? Christ did not take upon him the person or persons of one or more particular men, but the nature of man in general, and died in it ; why then are not all saved that are of that nature ? To which I answer, it is true ; it is indeed a great wonder, that Christ having died in the nature of man, and so put all mankind into a capacity of being

saved by him, yet that all should not be saved by him. But this certainly cannot be imputed to any defect or insufficiency in his merits, or power to save them ; but it must be wholly their own faults, in that they will not do what God requires, in order to their having the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings in their human nature applied and made over to their own particular human persons ; that is, they will not believe in him, nor trust in those promises which are made and sealed to us in his blood : for this is the great condition required on our parts, in order to our partaking of what he hath merited for us. As appears from the whole tenour of the Gospel ; yea, from Christ's own express words, who best knew upon what terms we should be saved by him ; for *God so loved the world*, saith he, *that he sent his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. *He that believeth in him is not condemned : but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he believeth not in the name of the only-begotten Son of God*, ver. 18. And elsewhere, *He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved ; but he that believeth not shall be damned*, Mark xvi. 16.

There are many such expressions dispersed over the whole Bible ; which plainly shew, that the main thing required of us, in order to our being saved by Christ, is to believe in him, to have a sure trust and confidence on him for all things necessary to our salvation.

And the first and great thing we must believe and trust in him for is, for grace to repent and forsake our sins ; for such a measure of his Holy Spirit, whereby we may mortify the deeds of the flesh, and be sanctified throughout in soul, body, and spirit ; for though our human nature in general be sanctified by its being united to the divine person, no human person in particular can be sanctified, but by partaking of the divine nature, communicated to us by the operation of the Holy Spirit, which Christ is always ready to give to those who be-

lieve in him for it, John vii. 38, 39. Insomuch, that whosoever doth not receive grace and assistance from him to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world, he may pretend what he will, but he doth not believe in Christ as he ought; for if he did, he could not fail of being purified and made holy by him. This being the great end why Christ gave himself for us, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify us to himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works*, Tit. ii. 14.

When by our believing in Christ, we have thus obtained power and grace to repent of our sins, then we may and ought to trust in him also for the pardon of those sins which we have thus repented of; stedfastly believing, that how many and great soever our former sins have been, yet that now, upon our hearty and sincere repentance of them, God hath absolved us from them all, for Christ Jesus's sake, and hath accepted of that death and punishment which his own Son underwent in our natures, as if it had been undergone by us in our own persons; so as to be now as perfectly reconciled to us, as if he had never been offended at all with us; yea, that he doth not only pardon and forgive us what is past, but he reckons us in the number of righteous persons, and accepts of us as such, in his beloved Son; who knowing no sin in himself, *was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. And not only our persons, but that our actions also, even our sincere, though imperfect, duties and good works, are all acceptable to God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, 1 Pet. ii. 5. And that being thus justified by him in time, we shall be glorified with him for evermore, Rom. viii. 30.

By such a regular and lively faith as this, (which always works by love,) none of us but may be really interested in all these glorious things which the Son of God hath purchased for us with his own blood; for faith, as the apostle tells us, *is the substance of things*

hoped for, and the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. It is the substance of things hoped for ; that is, whatsoever good things we hope for upon the account of what Christ hath done and suffered for us, and God hath promised to us for his sake ; faith is the very substance of them to us, it causeth them to subsist in us, and so puts us into the actual possession of them.

As, do we hope for Christ's Holy Spirit to sanctify and make us holy ? By faith, as we dwell in Christ, Christ's Spirit dwells in us ; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us ; and so we have the substance of what we hope for, even his divine nature subsisting virtually in us, as our human nature really subsisted in him. And therefore Christ himself saith, *that we are sanctified by faith that is in him*, Acts xxvi. 18. Do we hope for Christ's merits to pardon and justify us before God ? Faith is the substance of them to us ; applying and appropriating all the merits of Christ's obedience and sufferings in our nature to our own particular person. And therefore it is that we are so often said to be justified by faith, not as it is a work in us, but as it is the substance of Christ's righteousness to us, so that we also are accounted as righteous by it.

The same may be said of all the great blessings which Christ hath purchased for us, and God hath promised to us in him, and which by consequence we hope for from him. Faith is the substance of them to us, that by it we actually obtain and enjoy them. Insomuch, that they who have a strong and stedfast faith in Christ, are so fully possessed of God's love and mercy in him, that nothing is able to remove them from it. A remarkable instance whereof we have in St. Paul, who, acting his faith and confidence in his Saviour, cries out in a triumphant manner, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall*

separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 33, &c.

Thus now I have endeavoured to unfold as much as I could of the great mystery of our salvation by Christ. I am very sensible, that there are many things in it which we are not able to conceive, and that we may conceive much more than we are able to express. Howsoever, from these great and necessary truths which we have now premised, as plainly revealed in the Gospel, and therefore believed always by the catholic church, none of us but may easily discern what cause we have to believe that mankind in general, and by consequence all we in particular, notwithstanding our fall from our first estate, are now capable of obtaining eternal bliss and happiness, which the fallen angels are not capable of; for they, as they have all sinned against God, so they must all bear every one the punishment of his own sins in his own person; there being no other way whereby Almighty God can manifest his justice and displeasure against them for it; for, as the apostle observes, the Son of God *took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham*; and therefore the apostate angels are never the better for all his sufferings, as not being undergone in their nature. And therefore their case is desperate, their misery unavoidable. It is true, they know and believe there is a God, but they cannot trust on him, nor expect any mercy from him; for he never promised them any. And therefore they *believe and tremble*, as knowing that God is always angry with them, and can by no means be ever recon-

ciled to them. And hence it is, that they can never repent of their sins ; and if they did, it would stand them in no stead. No : sentence is passed upon them, they are all condemned to everlasting fire ; and there is no remedy, but they must endure it for ever

But, blessed be God, the case is not so with us ; for he himself hath provided us a Saviour, an all-sufficient Saviour, one who is able to save to the utmost *all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25.

Indeed, this is that which crowns all the rest ; that as he once died to make satisfaction for us upon earth, he ever lives to make intercession for us in heaven, where he now is in our nature united to his divine person ; upon which account, God hath so highly exalted him, even as he is man, that he *hath given him a name, which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 10. So that he is now advanced *above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name which is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come ; and God hath put all things under his feet, and hath given him to be head of all things to the church*, Eph. i. 21, 22. Such a glorious Saviour have we now in heaven, whom the angels themselves are bound to worship, and continually to do it : and though his manhood be only in heaven, his divine person, to which that manhood is united, is every where upon earth too. So that be we where we will, he is always present with us, and we may make our applications to him when we please. He is here with us at this time, and knows every word that I have said of him, and how every one of you are affected towards him. When we are at our devotions, public or private, he is there ready to assist and perfume them with his own merits. When we are in secret,

where nobody else sees us, be sure he doth. When we are in straits, and know not whither else to go for help, we may still go to him *who loved us, and gave himself for us*; and hath therefore told us, that *those that come to him, he will in no wise cast out*, John vi. 37

This therefore is that which I would now advise you to: for which purpose you must give me leave to speak freely to you; for I come not to you in my own name, but in his name who died for you, who redeemed you to himself with his own blood, and therefore may well be allowed to be plain with you.

That you are all sinners, I need not tell you; but I must tell you, that as ye are sinful, ye cannot but be miserable too; yea, therefore miserable, because sinful: so miserable, that ye are all by nature the children of wrath, whatsoever outward prosperity ye may seem to enjoy; ye are always liable not only to be stripped of that, but to be tormented with all the pain, and shame, and horror, that either your souls or bodies are capable of; for he that made you, is angry with you, and incensed against you: and what will you do, if he should rise up to take vengeance of you, for breaking those wise, and good, and righteous laws, that he hath set before you? Can you be able to dwell with everlasting burnings, or endure the scorplings of a consuming fire? How would you be amazed and confounded if you should see Omnipotence itself setting itself against you; glory, majesty, justice, yea, goodness and mercy itself, frowning upon you, demeaning itself as angry and displeased with you, and therefore pouring down fury, vengeance, and indignation upon you every moment?

Yet this is no more than what your sins have made you all obnoxious to. Insomuch, that if you look no farther than yourselves, you have no ground to expect one moment's respite out of the infernal flames, *prepared for the devil and his angels*.

Consider this, and then tell me, what you think of a

Saviour, one who can save you from your sins, and from the wrath of God that is due unto you for them? One that can reconcile Almighty God to you, and you to him? One who can alter your estate and disposition too, so as to make you equal to the holy angels themselves both in grace and glory? How happy would the fiends of hell account themselves, if they had such a Saviour? How earnestly would they flock after him, and strive which should embrace and love him most, which should serve and please him best, that so they might be restored by him to their former estate again? But this is an happiness which they can never hope for, it being designed only for mankind. But it being designed for mankind in general, all you that hear me at this time may not only hope for it, but you may have it too if ye will; nay, it is God's pleasure and command you should; for he would have all men to be saved, and by consequence you amongst the rest. And therefore if any of you be not, the only reason is, because ye will not. *Ye will not*, as Christ said, *come to him, that ye might have life*, John v. 40. And no wonder then if you be not saved, when ye will not come to him who alone can do it.

But are there any such men in the world? men that will not be saved though they may? men that refuse happiness when it is proffered them? and had rather continue in sin and misery, than to be freed from it? I wish there were not, but fear there are, too many amongst ourselves; some that think they can save themselves, and therefore will not be beholden to Christ for it. Others so much in love with sin, that they will not part from it for all that Christ hath purchased for them, and therefore will not go to him, for fear lest he should make them holy. But the greatest part of mankind, and of those also who have given up their name to Christ, are so much taken with the sensible objects they converse with here below, that they prefer them before all the Son of God hath or ever can do for them! **Ungrateful**

wretches ! Is this the return you make the Son of God for all his love and kindness to you ? What could we have done ? what could we have suffered ? what could we have procured more for you than he hath done ? and is all this nothing ? not so much as the dreams and shadows of this transient world ?

But I hope there are not many such amongst you, and heartily wish there were none at all. Howsoever, give me leave to deal plainly with you. Do ye really believe that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, or do ye not ? If you do not, what make you here, especially upon this day ? Why are ye not rather at some Turkish mosque or idol temple, or else about your worldly business ? What need you concern yourselves about the death of Christ, if ye do not believe that he died to save sinners ? But do you really believe that he died to save sinners ? Then he died to save you, who cannot but acknowledge yourselves to be sinners. And if so, what mean you, that you mind not your salvation by him, more than all things in the world besides ? Is it not the greatest, the only happiness you can ever attain to ? Did the Son of God himself think it worth his while to lay down his own life to procure it for you, and can you think it not worth your while to lay down your lives in the pursuit of it ? Certainly you cannot think so. But why then is it that you do not do it ?

Especially considering that how great an happiness soever it be, there is not a soul here present but may attain it, if you will but set yourselves in good earnest about it : Christ's blood being of that infinite value and virtue, that it can both expiate and cleanse you from all your sins. As many thousands have found already by their own experience, who once were miserable sinners upon earth, as you now are ; but are now by Christ made glorified saints in heaven. And why may not you be made so as well as they ? you have all the same Saviour as they had, and he is both as able and as willing to save you, as he was to save them. Insomuch, that if

any of you perish, your blood will be upon your own heads. And not only yours neither, but his too: in that you neglect and trample upon it, and will not make use of it to the saving of your souls, for which he shed it.

But let others do what they please, and take what follows. Let us who believe what we have now heard, even that Jesus Christ, being in the form of God, took upon him the form of a servant, the nature of man, and in it was obedient to death, even the death of the cross, that he might save us from our sins, and make us happy; let us, I say, who profess to believe this, endeavour to live accordingly, that we may lay hold on that eternal life which the Son of God hath purchased for us at so dear a rate: for which purpose let us apply ourselves to him in the sincere and constant use of those means which he hath appointed for our obtaining salvation by him; such as praying and fasting, reading and hearing his holy word, and receiving his mystical body and blood, still trusting in him to assist and influence them so with his Holy Spirit that they may be effectual to the ends for which he hath ordained them, even to the begetting and confirming our faith in him, and so to the mortifying our lusts, and to the quickening us with newness of life. Let us study his Gospel, and whatsoever he hath there said, let us therefore believe it, because he, who is truth itself, hath said it; and whatsoever he there commands, let us therefore do it, because he hath commanded it, who coming into the world on purpose to save us, would be sure to command us nothing, but what is absolutely necessary for our salvation.

Wheresoever we are, let our eye be still upon him, as always present with us, and interceding with his Father for us. *Whatsoever we do in word or deed*, let us *do all in the name of the Lord Jesus*, trusting on him for his assistance of us in the doing it; and for God's acceptance of it when it is done. Let our minds be always running after him, and our faith be so stedfastly fixed

on him, that we may continually derive grace and virtue from him, to subdue our corruptions, to withstand temptations, to live above the world, and to walk in all the commandments of God blameless. Whatsoever our condition be in this life, let us believe in him that died for us, to bless and sanctify it to the end for which he died, even to the salvation of our souls. Let us not despond or despair of God's mercy to us, nor of any thing that is or can be good for us; *for he that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not but with him also freely give all things,* Rom. viii. 32.

Being thus prepared and qualified for it, let us put our whole trust and confidence in him, to pardon and absolve us from all our sins, to defend and protect us from whatsoever is really evil for us, to guide us into all truth, to confirm and strengthen us in all goodness, to direct, assist, and bless us through the whole course of our pilgrimage here below, that when we depart out of this miserable and wicked world, we may go with him who hath done these great things for us, and enjoy that life which he hath purchased by his own death, even life with him, the eternal Son of God our Saviour : to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever Amen.

SERMON LXVIII.

THE MYSTERY OF OUR RECONCILIATION BY CHRIST
EXPLAINED.

2 COR. v. 18, 19.

And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation ; to wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them ; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.

AS man is properly called a reasonable creature, notwithstanding there may be here and there one that never had or hath lost the use of reason, and few that use it aright : so although there may perhaps be some particular men in the world which have no knowledge of God, and few that live as if they had ; yet nevertheless mankind in general may truly be said to agree in the acknowledgment of that invisible Being, which we call God, that made and still presides over the whole world. There being no nation we know of upon earth, so barbarous and savage, but where people some way or other express their sense and fear of such a Being, and do something or other whereby to get him to be favourable to them. And it is much to be observed, that almost all mankind, in all ages and places upon earth, have concurred in the use of blood for that purpose ; some killing beasts, others men, and some their own children, thinking thereby to obtain the favour of him that go-

verns the world ; and so procure something which they think would be good for them, or else avert some evil which otherwise might fall upon them.

How this should come about, deserves our most serious enquiry. That all mankind should have some general notions of God we cannot wonder, seeing the knowledge of him was imprinted at first upon our very minds ; and though the first impressions be much defaced, and worn out, yet there are such footsteps of them still remaining, as are plainly visible to the very light of nature ; so that no man that useth his reason can deny or doubt of the existence of the Deity, without offering violence to himself.

But that God would be pleased with men's taking away the life which he himself gives to his creatures, is not only above, but seems contrary to, our natural reason, and to those common notions of the divine perfections, which was interwoven, as it were, in our frame and temper. And therefore as no man could ever have thought this to be an acceptable service to God, unless he himself hath appointed and declared it ; so the knowledge and practice of it could never have spread itself, as it hath, all over the earth, unless it had come from some common root or stock. But how it should do so, he could never have known, but only from the holy Scriptures ; this being one of those many wonderful things, which no certain account can ever be given of by divine revelation.

But there we find, that the common parents of all mankind having transgressed the command, and so incurred the displeasure of Almighty God their Maker, and thereby made themselves and their whole posterity liable to the death which he had threatened in case of their disobedience, he was graciously pleased to promise and declare to them, that one should be born of the seed of the woman who should suffer death for them, and so redeem all from it who would believe the said promise, and trust on his word for the performance

of it ; which therefore that all might do, he was pleased to ordain, that the death of this great Redeemer of mankind should be foreshewn and represented by sacrificing or killing of beasts all along until it should be actually done, which was not to be till many ages after ; that mankind might all the while depend wholly upon his word for it, and so give him the glory due unto his goodness and truth. And according to the first of Adam's children that is reckoned among the righteous, even Abel, Matt. xxiii. 35. offered of the firstlings of his flock, and of the fat thereof ; which he would not have done if it had not been first commanded by God. But doing it in obedience to his command, and in confidence of his promise before mentioned, *God had respect to him and to his offering*, Gen. iv. 4. that is, he both approved of what Abel did, and accepted of him as a righteous person for the doing it ; which being so remarkable a thing, his brethren could not but all take notice of it, and for the future do as he did, that God might shew the same respect to them as he had done to Abel ; and likewise teach their children the same way whereby to obtain the favour of God. And so doubtless this practice was continued all along until the flood ; which was no sooner over, but righteous Noah also built an altar, and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and offered burnt-offerings on the altar, Gen. ix. 20. *And the Lord smelled a sweet savour*, Gen. viii. 21 that is, he was well pleased with what Noah did, and with him for the doing it ; which his children observing, such of them as feared God, and desired his favour, could not but take the same course for it, and transmit it also down to their posterity : and all the earth being overspread by them, hence it came to be received and continued more or less in all the parts of it, Africa itself not excepted, that was peopled by the offspring of Ham. Though he not being so careful to instruct his children in it as his brethren were, it seems

to have been more forgotten and disused in some places there, than in the other parts of the world.

But although this way of appeasing the wrath and conciliating the favour of God, by killing and offering living creatures to him, hath been thus received by universal tradition in all the parts of the earth, and people generally have used it in all ages; yet in process of time they came to use it only as an old custom received from their forefathers, without knowing any thing of the reason or design of it; which therefore God was pleased to put his people the Jews in mind of, by ordering their sacrifices to be offered in such a manner, and with such circumstances, as plainly shewed the respect they had to the great sacrifice which was to be offered, according to his promise, for the sins of the world; and that they were only types and shadows of that, and therefore had no virtue in themselves, nor power to effect what was designed by them, but what they received from thence; which God's faithful people understood so well, that in all those typical sacrifices they had still an eye to that which was typified by them, as the great and only effectual means whereby to have Almighty God reconciled to them: though all others, having a veil upon their faces, could not so well see through the types and figures under which this great truth was then represented.

But now the veil is taken away, so that all may see it. For now that this grand sacrifice, which was promised and typified all along from the beginning of the world, hath been accordingly offered up by Jesus Christ, the only-begotten of God, in the body which he for that purpose assumed: now, I say, it is evident to all that do not wilfully shut their eyes, that it is only in him, and by virtue of his sacrifice, that Almighty God is reconciled to mankind, so as to shew them any grace or favour. For this is now brought to light by the Gospel, and is indeed the chief thing that is there revealed all along; and particularly in this place by the apostle, say-

ing, that *God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.*

Which words containing the great mystery of our reconciliation to the most high God, I shall endeavour to give you as full and clear an explication of them as I can, by considering of these things.

I. What is here meant by God's reconciling the word unto himself.

II. That he hath done it by Jesus Christ.

III. In what sense the apostle here saith, that the ministry and word of this reconciliation is given and committed unto us, and that by God himself.

That we may clearly see into the meaning of God's reconciling the world unto himself, it will be necessary to look back upon the reason of his being angry with it; without which there would have been no occasion or subject-matter for a reconciliation. For which purpose, therefore, I shall endeavour to explain this first question in these following propositions.

1 Almighty God being infinitely great and good, and happy in himself, we cannot imagine what other end he could propose to himself in making the world, than his own glory, even to manifest himself and the glory of his own perfections. According to that of the Wise-man, *The Lord hath made all things for himself*, Prov. xvi. 4. And as this was the end of his making, so it is of his preserving and governing the world, and of all and every thing that he ever did, or doth, or will do in it. Whatsoever he doth, he doth it for his own glory.

2. Hence he made all things so as might best serve to that end. For *God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good*, Gen. i. 31. that is, every thing was exactly fitted to set forth his glory, in

the way and manner which he designed it should do so, and so answered his end in making it.

3. All the material world, and all creatures whatsoever which are not endued with reason, always did, and still continue to accomplish his end in making them, by acting and moving always according as he would have them, and so discovering the glory of his infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, in the contrivance, production, and government of them. Thus *the heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy work*, Psal. xix. 1. And so doth every one of the least, as well as the greatest things both in heaven and earth.

4. If he had made none but the material world, although he displayed his glory in the making it, yet there would have been nothing to have seen it but himself; simple matter not being capable of reflecting upon itself, nor any thing else. Wherefore God was pleased to make some creatures of a spiritual nature, enduing them with reason and understanding to contemplate upon, admire, and celebrate the infinite perfections which he manifesteth in the world, and likewise with liberty and freedom of will, that they might do what he commanded for his glory; not like other creatures, with a kind of natural impulse, but out of choice, with the bent and inclination of their minds. Of these he made two sorts, the one purely spiritual, called angels, the other partly spiritual, and partly material, or spirit joined to matter, which we call men, created here upon earth, as the other were in heaven.

5. Of these two sorts of reasonable and free agents, the first called angels, being all created together, and left to use the freedom of will wherewith they were endued, the greatest part of them chose to continue in the same estate wherein they were created, and have accordingly been ever since glorifying their almighty Creator, and doing the work which he for that purpose hath

set them, Psal. ciii. 20, 21 Rev. iv. 10, 21. vii. 11, 12. and therefore always continue in his love and favour. But many of them abusing the freedom which God had given them, chose to leave their first estate, to lay aside the business, and transgress the laws which he had prescribed, whereby to advance his honour and glory; wherefore he that made them was justly displeased with them: and seeing they would not give him the glory that was due to the goodness which he manifested in making them, he manifested the glory of his justice in casting them down to hell, and *delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. as a potter dasheth that vessel to pieces that is not fit for the use to which he designed it.

6. As many of the angels, so all mankind, fell from their first estate, though not as the other did, every one by his own personal act, yet all in their common head, Adam; for being all to proceed by successive generations from him, and therefore contained in him, when he ate of the fruit which God had forbidden him, they were all thereby corrupted, and made unfit for the service for which they were created; insomuch, *that there is none that doeth good, no not one*. None that serve and glorify their almighty Creator by observing the laws which he hath set them. But they are all gone out of the way; they all neglect the business which God sent them into the world about, and so have frustrated his holy end in making them; and therefore they are altogether fallen under his displeasure, *they are all by nature the children of wrath*, Eph. ii. 3. and might justly have been all condemned to that everlasting fire, which is prepared for the devil and his angels, before spoken of. Neither could they expect any other, seeing they, as well as the fallen angels, have offended him that made them, and dishonoured his holy name, by making themselves incapable of the service he made them for and so not answering his end in making them.

But, lastly, there being now two sorts of creatures in the world that have offended their almighty Creator, by not giving him the glory which he designed to himself in creating of them, the fallen angels, and men, he was pleased to retrieve and advance his own glory another way by each of them. Upon the first he manifested, as I observed before, the glory of his justice, by condemning them to their deserved punishments; but in the other he shewed forth the glory of his wisdom, by finding out a way whereby to reconcile them to himself, as the apostle here speaks, that is, to restore them again to his favour; for that is the proper meaning of the word, wheresoever it occurs in the New Testament, where one is said to be reconciled to another, when that other is reconciled to him: as where our Saviour saith, that when one remembereth that his brother hath ought against him, he must first be reconciled to his brother, before he offer his gift, Matt. v 23, 24. Where the brother being the person offended, it is plain, that by his being reconciled to his brother, is meant his brother's being reconciled to him, so as not to be any longer angry or displeased with him, for the offence or wrong which he had received from him. So here, where the apostle says that God was reconciling the world to himself, the meaning is, that God was reconciling himself to the world, or to mankind, as the word *world* here signifies, as well as in many other places of holy Writ; that is, God was pacifying himself, or appeasing the wrath which he had justly conceived against mankind, for the dishonour he had received by their transgressing the laws which he had enacted for the glory of his holy name. Thus the apostle himself explains the meaning of God's reconciling the world to himself, by adding, *not imputing their trespasses unto them*; that is, not charging their offences or transgressions upon them, so as to punish them according as they deserved, but forgiving or remitting them all to them, so as to be in peace again with them, and receive them again into his grace

and favour, as much as if they had never offended him. Which, in other places of Scripture, is expressed by his being gracious and merciful unto them, by his loving and delighting again in them, and by his being as well pleased with them, as if he had never been displeased. This is that which is here meant by God's reconciling the world unto himself.

But how can this be? how can we imagine that the Lord most holy should ever be reconciled to the wicked world? He made men to honour him, but they would not do it; but acted rather just contrary to what he for that purpose commanded them; which was a great affront and dishonour to his divine Majesty, in that he hereby seemed to lose his end in making them. For which therefore his wrath was highly incensed against them; and who is able to abide it? *If any man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him,* 1 Sam. ii. 25. None certainly can do it effectually for men, without making satisfaction to him for the dishonour which he hath received from them; which being impossible for any creature to do, God himself was graciously pleased to undertake it, as we are here assured by his apostle, saying, that *God had reconciled us to himself*. But how did he do it? He did it, as it is here also said, in and through Jesus Christ. *He hath reconciled us to himself*, saith the apostle, *by Jesus Christ*. And again, *God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*.

This is the great mystery revealed in the Gospel of Christ, who is therefore called *the Prince of peace*, Isa. ix. 6. because it is by him that our peace is made with God. According to that of the same prophet concerning him, *How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace*, Isa. lii. 7. To the same purpose is that of the prophet Daniel, speaking of the precise time of Christ's coming into the world, *Seventy weeks are de-*

*terminated upon thy people, and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgressions, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, &c. Dan. ix. 24. And accordingly when he was actually born, a multitude of the heavenly host sang, Glory be to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men, Luke ii. 14. Whereby we are taught, that by him, whose nativity was then celebrated in the choir of heaven, Almighty God was in peace with the earth, and had a good will or kindness again for men, and that too in such a way, that his glory was secured, yea, and advanced; it is glory in the highest. The holy angels themselves, who had hitherto been taken up with praising and glorifying the infinite wisdom and power which he manifested in the creation of the world, and the goodness which shined forth in all his works, they had now new matter of praise and thanksgiving, in that their almighty Creator and Governor now displayed the glory of his love and favour to their fellow-creatures upon earth, notwithstanding their manifold provocations of him, and that too in so wonderful a manner, that they could not but admire and adore him in the highest manner they could for it, saying, *Glory be to God in the highest.* And that we might know wherefore they gave this most high glory to him, they add, *peace upon earth, good will towards men.* This is his glory, the highest glory which the angels themselves could praise him for.*

And verily, if we could look as far into this great mystery as the holy angels do, we should soon be of their mind, and join with them in glorifying him to the highest for it. But that we can never expect to do till we come to them: howsoever, that we may have as clear a sight of it as we are capable of in this mortal state, we must first observe in general, that the glorious Person who was then born, the Prince of peace, purchased our peace for us with the price of his own blood: for, as the apostle saith, *When we were enemies, we were*

reconciled unto God by the death of his Son, Rom. v. 10. For he is our peace, he hath made both Jew and Gentile one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us, having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; and that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby, Eph. ii. 14, 15, 16. It was therefore by the blood which he shed, by the death which he suffered upon the cross, that our peace and reconciliation with God was made. And it was typified also in the Mosaic law, by the priests making atonement and reconciliation for the sins of the people, with the blood of the sacrifice which he had before offered, Lev. xvi. 15, 17. And accordingly we read, that in king Hezekiah's time the priests brought forth the he-goats for a sin-offering, and killed them, and they made reconciliation with their blood upon the altar, to make an atonement for all Israel, 2 Chron. xxix. 24. Which was only a type or shadow of that grand sacrifice which our true High-priest offered in his body upon the cross, to make atonement for the sins of the world, that Almighty God might be at peace, or, as we say, at one again with us. According to that of the apostle, *Therefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest, in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted, Heb. ii. 17, 18.* But that we may fully understand how we are thus reconciled to God by the death of his Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ, it will be necessary to observe these following particulars.

First, that the apostle doth not only say, that God hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, but likewise, *that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself.* It was still God's own work, but he did

it by Christ, and in him too : so that God was in Christ at the doing of it, and of every thing that was done in order to it. As we learn also from Christ himself, saying, *Believest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me ? The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself : but the Father, that dwelleth in me, he doeth the work*, John xiv. 10. Every thing therefore that was done by the man Christ Jesus, was done also by God dwelling in him ; *for in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*, Col. ii. 9. It was substantially united to his human nature, so that he was God and man in one and the same person. And therefore when he offered up himself, it was God that did it : the blood he shed was the blood of God, Acts xx. 28. *And hereby*, saith St. John, *perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us*, John iii. 16. which being so plainly revealed by God himself, how much soever it may seem above the reach of our finite and corrupt understanding, we have all the reason that can be to believe it. And it is well for us we have so, seeing the main stress of our reconciliation lies upon it, insomuch, that he who doth not believe this, can never believe it possible for him ever to find any favour in the sight of God. Whereas he who believes this, as all must do that believe the Scripture to be given by inspiration of God, may easily see what ground we have to expect all the favour we can desire from him.

For from hence it appears, in the next place, that the death which Jesus Christ suffered for the sins of the world, was more than the death of all the men in the world ; forasmuch as the death of all the men in the world could have been no more than the death of so many finite persons ; whereas his was the death of a person that is infinite ; and therefore not only as much to the utmost, as was due to the sins of all mankind, but infinitely more. And so did not only satisfy the justice, but likewise merited the favour of God for them ; and that too in the same way, wherein they had before

lost it. They had lost the favour of God, by not giving him the glory which he designed to himself in his creation of them. But now his glory was advanced more than they could ever have done it, if they had continued in their first estate. For a divine person having suffered the punishment of their sins, the glory of his justice appeared more gloriously than it did, or could ever have done any other way. And by this means also a way was opened, whereby to discover the glory of several other divine perfections, which otherwise would never have shined forth as they now do in the world.

For, thirdly, his only-begotten Son, having thus offered up himself as a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of all mankind, God in him, and upon the account of his most meritorious death, hath promised them his grace and favour again, and so hath engaged his truth for the performance of all such promises which he made in Christ; *for all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, to the glory of God by us*, 2 Cor. i. 20. To the glory of God; for that appeareth most gloriously in all his promises; the glory of his grace in making, and the glory of his truth in his fulfilling of them. So that, as the *law was given by Moses, grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. They came into the world by him, without him mankind had never seen or known any of these divine perfections; for God would neither have shewn them any grace or mercy, nor made them any promises whereby to manifest his truth unto them; whereas in Christ his grace and truth appear as glorious in the world, as his wisdom or power, or any other of his infinite perfections. And seeing he doth all things for his own glory, if we may take the boldness to offer our conjectures at the reason of any thing which our almighty Creator doth, this might be given as one, wherefore he was pleased to suffer mankind to fall, even that the glory of his grace and truth might appear in the redemption of them by

Jesus Christ, which otherwise, as far as we can see, it could never have done.

Hence, lastly, therefore it is, that although Jesus Christ died for the sins of the whole world, and the promises are accordingly made to all, yet none have his grace actually conferred upon them, without believing his word, and so giving him the glory of his truth, which he designed to himself in the redemption of them. For without that they do not answer his end in redeeming, no more than they did before in his creating them ; and therefore have no ground to expect any more grace or favour at his hands. From whence also we may see the reason wherefore faith is absolutely required, as it is in God's holy word, in order to our obtaining any of the blessings which Christ hath merited, and God in him hath promised to us, even that God may be thereby glorified, as he is in all that believe, 2 Thess. i. 10. And therefore all that believe in our Lord Jesus Christ, according to what God hath revealed of him in his holy word, and accordingly trust on the promises which are there made and confirmed to mankind in him, they have the said promises actually fulfilled to them, so as to enjoy all the benefits of Christ's death for the pardon of their sins, and for their justification before God. *In him they have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace,* Eph. i. 7 And though they be not perfectly righteous in themselves, yet, through his merit they are accounted righteous by God himself; *for he hath made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him,* 2 Cor. v. 21 This was the end wherefore he, who was no sinner, suffered as a sinner for us, that we, who are not righteous, may be accepted of as righteous through him. As our sins were laid on him, his righteousness is imputed unto us ; and so we are justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in *Jesus Christ, whom God hath set*

forth to be a propitiation, or rather a propitiatory, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness; that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, Rom. iii. 24, 25, 26.

These things being thus briefly premised, we may easily see how God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself; for, as he himself tells us by his apostle, *being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, Rom. v. 1 and being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him, ver 9.* Whereby we are assured, that, upon our believing in his Son Jesus Christ, our sins, for which he was justly offended with us, are done away by his blood; and that he looks upon us no longer as sinners of the stock of the first Adam, but as members of the last Adam, Christ, and in him as just and righteous persons; and therefore is no longer angry, but at peace with us, reconciled, and well-pleased with us in him, as much as if we had never offended or displeased him: according to that remarkable saying of the apostle to the Colossians, *You that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy, and unblameable, and unreprouable in his sight: if ye continue in the faith grounded and settled, and be not moved away from the hope of the Gospel, Col. i. 21, 22, 23.* Where we see that God himself, in the body of the flesh which he assumed, and through the death which he suffered in that body, reconciles those who before were enemies, if they continue in the faith, so as to present them holy, unblameable, and unreprouable in his own sight: though he see their faults, he doth not blame, so as to condemn them for them, having taken the punishment upon himself, and so hath discharged them by the death which he suffered for them in his own body; so that he now looks upon them as holy and

righteous persons in his Son, and likewise makes them such in themselves, as far as they are capable of it in this their corrupt and imperfect state. He purifies their hearts at the same time, and by the same faith, whereby he justifies their persons : they being in Christ are become *new creatures*, 2 Cor. v. 17 *being created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10. and so are another sort of people from the rest of the world ; a communion of saints, wholly inclined and addicted to piety, and virtue, and all manner of good works, as other people are to vice and wickedness. And whatsoever they do in the name of the *Lord Jesus Christ*, Col. iii. 17. *is acceptable to God through him*, 1 Pet. ii. 5. All the defects in their good works (which in the best are many) being perfectly made up by that most perfect obedience which he performed in their nature and stead to death itself, even the death of the cross. By means whereof he smells a sweet savour, and is pleased with all the good works they do, notwithstanding all their imperfections ; *the sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord, but the prayer of the upright is his delight*, Prov. xv. 8.

Thus therefore it is that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself, suffering in him the punishments which were due unto their sins, and therefore absolving all that believe in him, so as to accept of them as righteous, and dealing accordingly with them ; for he now looks upon them as his own children, his elect and peculiar people, and is so perfectly reconciled to them, that he hath a special love and kindness for them ; and all because they believe in his Son Jesus Christ, in whom he himself is well-pleased, and by whom he hath reconciled them to himself. As we learn also from the mouth of the Son himself, saying to his disciples, and in them to all that believe in him, *For the Father himself loveth you, because ye have loved me, and have believed that I came out from God*, John xvi. 27

But here we must farther observe, that the apostle

saying, *that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself*, he thereby intimates, that this is no transient, but a permanent, or rather a continued act: he did not only do it once, but he is always doing it; he is still reconciling the world unto himself by Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, not who did, but who doth *take away the sin of the world*, or is always taking it away, as the word *ὁ αἰών* implies, John i. 29. Though he offered up himself but once, yet, by virtue of *that one oblation of himself once offered, he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. continually propitiating or reconciling his Father unto all that truly believe in him. He is always the Mediator between God and them, 1 Tim. ii. 5. *their Advocate with the Father*, 1 John ii. 1. *now appearing in the presence of God*, Heb. ix. 24. *and ever living to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25. and so reconciling them unto God, and making their peace with him, whensoever there is an occasion for it, as there always is; the best men generally doing what is good, yet do many things so ill, that they could never continue in the favour of God, if his Son was not continually interceding for them, and reconciling him unto them. But he, the Sun of righteousness, shining continually in heaven, and from thence reflecting his righteousness upon them, both they themselves, and all the good works they do, appear by that means as if they were perfectly righteous; and that is the reason they always live under the light of God's countenance shining upon them, and are kept in his love and favour, even because their Advocate and High-priest is always making atonement and reconciliation for them. By means whereof every true believer may say, as St. Paul did, *I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of*

God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord, Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Thus I have endeavoured to set before you, in as clear a light as I could, the great mystery of the Gospel; *to wit, how God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself*; whereby you may see how you also may be reconciled to him if ye will. Nothing now remains, but to consider in what sense the apostle here saith, *that God hath committed unto us the ministry and word of reconciliation*; which may be soon dispatched: for the Lord of sabaoth, the almighty Creator and Governor of the world, *dwelling in the light which no man can approach unto; whom no man hath seen nor can see*; if he himself should speak unto us, in his own divine person, we could not see him that speaks, much less should we be able to bear what comes immediately from his infinite height and glory. And therefore, as he was graciously pleased to take upon him our nature, and in it to reconcile the world unto himself, so he is pleased likewise to make use of some that are of the same nature, to declare and apply this his reconciliation to the rest of the world, that they might receive it from him by the hands of such whom they themselves could see, and accordingly give him the glory of his grace and truth, by taking it upon his word, delivered to them by such as he sends to do it. I say such as he sends, for none can take this office upon them unless they be called and sent by God himself; *for how shall they preach except they be sent?* Rom. x. 15. Other people may speak the same things; but they cannot preach the Gospel of reconciliation, except they be sent by God himself to do it, no more than he who hath no commission can execute the office of an ambassador; wherefore the apostle, speaking in the name of all that are sent by God, saith, *that God hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation*; that is, he hath given us commission and authority to propound and treat of

peace and reconciliation with you in his name, as his ambassadors sent by him for that end and purpose. And therefore the apostle immediately adds, *now then are we ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead to be reconciled unto God*, ver. 20. And certainly to be an ambassador for Christ, an ambassador of peace too, of peace with the King of kings, is an office not to be slighted, as it is in this profane age, but highly esteemed and magnified, as the most sacred, and most honourable employment that any man can have.

For here ye see what our office and ministry is. *We are ambassadors for Christ*; we come not in our own name, but his; neither do we come to proclaim war, but to offer peace; that peace which he hath procured for you with his own blood. You have all rebelled against Almighty God your maker, and are therefore obnoxious to his displeasure. But he hath reconciled you to himself in our Lord and Master Christ, and sends us to declare and offer this his reconciliation to you. And we, according to our instructions, pray you in his stead to accept of it; that you would stand out no longer, but take care to be reconciled to God, or to partake of that peace and reconciliation which he hath made for you.

For which purpose, therefore, I pray you all, in Christ's stead, to repent and believe the Gospel, forsake and avoid the sins wherewith ye have hitherto dishonoured and offended the most high God your maker, and study for the future to serve and honour him, by doing all such good works as he hath set you: *and whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ*, believing and trusting on him to make your peace with God. Do but this, and I assure you, in his name, that he will do it for you. He will reconcile you to Almighty God, and restore you to his love and favour, as much as if ye had never lost it. And how happy will ye then be, when he that governs the

whole world shall become your friend, and have a particular kindness for you ? His grace will then be always sufficient for you, and his strength made perfect in your weakness ; his Spirit will be always ready to direct you what to do, and to assist you in the doing it ; his holy angels will minister unto you, and keep you, by his order, in all your ways ; his blessing will be upon all ye have, and upon all ye do ; his power will protect you from all evil, and make *all things work together for your good*, all the while ye are here below ; and, when ye go hence, ye will go to Christ in paradise, and there enjoy all the fruits of that blessed peace which he hath made for you, in their highest perfection. Then you will taste and see what infinite cause you have to bless God, to praise him, to worship him, to glorify him, to give him thanks for his great glory, in reconciling you to himself by his only-begotten Son Jesus Christ : *to whom, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, be honour and glory for ever. Amen.*

S E R M O N L X I X .

THE SATISFACTION OF CHRIST EXPLAINED.

1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.

My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous : and he is the propitiation for our sins : and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

THIS Epistle, written by the apostle and evangelist St. John, is called his catholic or general Epistle, because it is not written to any particular person, as both his other are, nor to any particular church or society of Christians, as most of St. Paul's were ; but this is written to the whole catholic church, to all Christians in general ; which he calls his little children. Little children he might well call them, because, the church being as yet in its infancy, they were but newly born again of water, and of the Holy Ghost ; or, as St. Peter speaks, were *but new born babes*, 1 Pet. ii. 2. at least in respect of him who was a father in the church. And his little children, because he had been a great instrument in propagating the church in which they were so regenerate and born again : and, besides, he useth this endearing compellation, *my little children*, the better to shew the great care and love he had for them ; such as a father hath for his little children, that they might be the more ready to hearken to that fatherly advice he was now to give them. As St. Paul, for the same purpose, saith to the Corinthians, *I write not these things*

to shame you, but as my beloved sons I warn you. For though you have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet have ye not many fathers : for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel, 1 Cor. iv. 14, 15. So St. John here saith to all Christians, My little children, these things I write unto you, that ye sin not.

These things, all that went before, and all that follow after, all that I write in this Epistle, all these things I write unto you for this end and purpose, *that ye sin not* ; that ye allow not yourselves in any known sin, or rather (as he afterwards expresseth it) that ye do not commit sin, no sin whatsoever, neither of omission nor of commission, neither against the first, nor against the second table ; that ye never wilfully and deliberately transgress any one of God's laws, either by doing what he hath forbidden, or not doing what he hath commanded ; but that ye make it your constant care and study to *walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord*, to the utmost of your knowledge and power, *blameless*. This was the great end of his writing these things unto them, as it is of all the holy writings, that men might know the will of God and do it, and so not sin against him ; which the apostle therefore requires them to take special heed of above all things else, even *that they sin not* ; that they do not *turn the grace of God into wantonness* ; that they do not abuse the great doctrine he was about to deliver to them, concerning the propitiation which Christ hath made for their sins ; that they do not abuse it, so as to take encouragement from thence to continue in sin, or do any thing contrary to the laws of God ; but that they make it the chief care of their whole lives to avoid all manner of sin as much as possibly they can. *These things*, saith he, *I write unto you, that ye sin not.*

But then he adds, *and if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father*. He had said a little before, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves,*

and the truth is not in us : and again, *If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us,* chap. i. 8, 10. And therefore, notwithstanding the strict charge he here gives to all Christians not to sin, yet, knowing and considering the frailty of our nature, he supposeth that any man, after all his care and diligence, may sometimes fall into sin, not only into the common sins of human infirmity, which all are continually subject to, but likewise into some such sin as may wound his conscience to the quick, and lie so heavy upon his mind, as to be ready to sink him down into horror and despair at the remembrance of it. Now what would the apostle have a man do in this case? would he have him lay aside all hopes of mercy, and despair of ever having his sin pardoned? No, by no means. But he would have such a one look up to heaven, and consider that we have an Advocate there; *if any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father ;* we, all of us, as we have all sinned, we have all an Advocate to plead our cause, and intercede with the Father for the pardon of our sins, and that no less a person than Jesus Christ the righteous, perfectly righteous in every circumstance and punctilio of the moral law, *who needed not daily, as the high-priests under the law, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's,* Heb. vii. 27 *for he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth,* 1 Pet. ii. 22. and therefore is completely qualified (which otherwise he would not have been) to intercede for the pardon of other men's sins; and he is able to do it effectually too, in that *he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.*

This is the design and meaning of the words in general: but seeing they contain matter of such extraordinary use and comfort to all sinners, (such as we all are,) it will be worth our while to treat a little more particularly of them, and for that purpose to shew,

I. In what sense Christ is here said to be the propitiation for our sins.

II. That he being the propitiation of our sins, he is therefore a most powerful Advocate with the Father for us.

III. That seeing Jesus Christ the righteous is such an Advocate with the Father for us, to our great comfort, we cannot fail of God's mercy in the pardon of our sins, if we do but repent and believe the Gospel.

First, therefore, we may observe, that *propitiation* is originally a Latin word, and signifies the appeasing the wrath of God, or doing something whereby he may be rendered propitious, kind, or merciful to us, notwithstanding that we have provoked him to anger by any sin or offence committed against him. And the original word in my text, *ἱλασμός*, is used by the Greeks exactly in the same sense, as might easily be shewn. But that we may fully understand the true notion of the word, as it is here used, our best way will be to consider how it is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, made long before St. John's time; for he, writing to those who were generally accustomed to the words and phrases in that translation, it cannot be supposed but he useth this, as well as other words, in the same sense as it is used there; for otherwise they would not so well have understood him. Now there we find that *ἱλάσκεσθαι* and *ἐξιλάσασθαι* all along answer to the כפר, which signifies to appease, to pacify, to reconcile a person offended, to atone or make him at one again with the offender. So both the Hebrew and Greek words are used, where it is said, *the wrath of a king is as messengers of death, but a wise man will pacify it*, Prov. xvi. 14. And also where Jacob, having sent a present before him to his brother Esau that was offended with him, saith, *I will appease him with the present that goeth before me*, Gen. xxxii. 20. He calls his present מנחה, a word commonly used for offerings to God; that was his propi-

tiation, whereby his brother was reconciled to him. So were the sacrifices in the Levitical law, they were the *ἱλασμοὶ*, the expiations, or propitiations, whereby God was atoned or appeased towards him which brought them; or, as it is there expressed, they were accepted for him to make atonement for him, Lev. i. 4. And when a man had thus brought his offering, and the priest had therewith made atonement for him for the sin he had committed, then it was forgiven him, as we often read, Lev. iv. 20. 26. 31. v. 10, 18. In all which places both the Hebrew and Greek words before mentioned are used; the first by Moses himself, the other by the Seventy which translated him. And therefore we cannot doubt but that the Greek word in my text, coming from the same root, is here also used in the same sense, for such a propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice, whereby God is reconciled, or rendered propitious to us, and our sins are forgiven us; God accepting, as it were, of that sacrifice, instead of the punishment which was due unto us for them.

The same appears also from several words derived from the same Hebrew root, as *כֶּפֶר*, which the Seventy sometimes translate *λύτρα*, or *λύτρον*, which signifies a ransom, a price paid for the redemption of a man's life that was forfeited by any capital crime, something given in recompence and satisfaction for the crime whereby it was done, Exod. xxi. 30. xxx. 12. Numb. xxxv. 31, 32. Prov. vi. 35. xiii. 8. Sometimes *ἀλλαγμα*, commutation, or propitiation, as the vulgar Latin renders it, Isa. xliii. 3. Amos v. 12. Sometimes *περιβάραμα*, *piaculum*, or a sacrifice offered for the purging or expiating some heinous crime, or for the diverting some heavy judgment from one to another, as Prov. xvi. 18. where the Wise-man saith, *the wicked shall be a ransom* (as we translate it) *for the righteous*; that is, as he himself elsewhere explains it, *the righteous is delivered out of trouble, and the wicked cometh in his stead*, Prov. xi. 8. sometimes they translate it *ἐξίλασμα*, propitiation, expia-

tion, Psal. xlix. 8. And so the Jews anciently used this word in their common discourse; for when one of them would shew the greatest love he could to another, he would say, *הנני כפרו*, *Behold, let me be his expiation*; that is, as one of their most learned writers interprets it, *let his iniquities be upon me, that I may bear the punishments of them, Baal Aruch, in voce כפר*. Which will give us great light into the true notion of the word, as we shall see anon.

Another word from the same Hebrew root is *כפרוס*, which is commonly used likewise for a ransom, atonement, expiation, propitiation, or the like. As where we read of the *כסף הכפרוס*, the atonement-money, the Seventy render it *τὸ ἀργύριον τῆς εισφορᾶς*, the tribute-money that every man was to give for the ransom of his life, when the people were numbered, Exod. xxx. 12, 15, 16. The sin-offering of atonement, *τῆς ἐξιλάσεως*, of propitiation, as the Seventy translate it, Numb. xxix. 11. Exod. xxx. 10. The ram of the atonement, in the Greek *κριοῦ τοῦ ἱλασμοῦ*, (the word in my text,) the ram of propitiation, Numb. v. 8. So Ezek. xlv. 27. In all which places we see the word is used to denote something offered or laid down for the pardon of a man's sins, and so for the redemption of his life that was forfeited by them. But that which is most observable in this case is, that the great day, when the two goats were chosen, the one for a sin offering, with the blood whereof the high-priest made atonement for the people in the most holy place, and the other for the scape-goat, upon the head whereof he confessed and laid the sins of the people, and then sent him away into the wilderness, never to be heard of more, Lev. xvi. 15, 21. this day, I say, is called *יום כפרים*, the day of atonement, or as the Seventy render it, by the word in my text, *ἡμέρα τοῦ ἱλασμοῦ*, and, which is the same, *τοῦ ἐξιλασμοῦ*, the day of propitiation, Lev. xxv. 9. xxiii. 27, 28. To which we might also add, that the lid or cover of the ark, where the law lay, is called *כפרת*, which the Seventy translate *ἱλαστήριον*,

the *propitiatory*, we the *mercy-seat*. But of that I may have occasion to speak more afterwards.

These things, I confess, may seem something too nice and critical, but I could not but take notice of them, for the satisfaction of myself and of all that understand the original languages, as being of great use to our finding out what the apostle here means by propitiation, according to the common notion of the word he useth in those days, and among those to whom he wrote; for hereby we may perceive, that by the word *propitiation* here used, is meant such a sacrifice or offering, made to God for the sins of men, which he is pleased to accept of as a sufficient atonement and satisfaction for the dishonour and injury that was done him by them, so as not to require the punishments which were due unto him for them, but to forgive them all, and to become again as kind and propitious to the persons that offended him, as if he had never been offended by them. For he is now propitiated, he is pacified, and reconciled to them; he receives them into his love and favour again, and so into the same state they were in before he was displeased with them.

But could any of those Levitical sacrifices which we have discoursed of be such a propitiation for the sins committed against God? No, surely not in themselves; for, as the apostle observes, *the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices, which they offered year by year continually, make the comers thereunto perfect; for then would they not have ceased to be offered: because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sin. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins*, Heb. x. 1, 2, 3, 4. Howsoever they might serve to the *purifying of the flesh*, as the same apostle speaks, chap. ix. 13. that is, to the cleansing of outward and Levitical impu-

rities ; they could have no virtue in themselves to take off the guilt that was contracted by the breach of the moral law. But all the atonement or propitiation that is said to be made by them for any sin, was effected only by the blood of Christ, typified and represented in them : for he is here said to be *the propitiation for the sins of the whole world*. And therefore no sin in the world could ever be expiated, or have propitiation made for it, any other way but by him ; his being the only real and substantial sacrifice that ever was offered, and all others were only types and shadows of his, and therefore could have no power or efficacy at all without it.

But his was so powerful and effectual to all intents and purposes, that he, as the apostle here saith, *is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world* ; that is, as our church explaineth it, *he, by the one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the whole world*, or of all mankind. So that there is no man in the whole world, but his sins may be all pardoned by it, and he may be accepted of as righteous before God, without any violation of his honour, justice, or truth. But this being the main foundation of all our hopes of pardon and salvation, I shall endeavour to make it as clear as I can in these following propositions.

1. The eternal Son of God, when he became man, took not on him the nature of any particular human person, but the whole nature of man in general ; which having no subsistence out of his divine Person, could not constitute another person distinct from the divine, but he was one only person both as God and man ; *the word was made flesh*, John i. 14.

2. He in this nature, so assumed, lived several years upon earth in perfect obedience to the moral law, and at length died too in it. He was obedient all his life until death, *even the death of the cross*, Phil. ii. 8.

3. He could not have suffered this death but for some

sin or other. For *death is the wages of sin*, Rom. vi. 26. Therefore, where there is no sin, there can be no death.

4. He could not suffer for any sin of his own, for he had none to suffer for, Dan. ix. 20. *He did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. but was every way most perfectly righteous, and the only man that ever was so; and therefore is properly called in my text, *Jesus Christ the righteous*. Hence,

5. That death, and whatsoever else he suffered, he suffered it only for the sins of men, in whose nature he suffered it. There were no other sins that we know of in the world for which he might have suffered, except those of the fallen angels; but he took not on him their nature, and therefore could not suffer for their sins. But he took upon him the nature of man, the common nature that all men are of, and whatsoever he ever suffered was only in that nature, and, by consequence, for the sins only of those who are of that nature in which he suffered, even for the sins of men, as the holy Scriptures all along assure us. *He was delivered for our offences*, saith St. Paul, Rom. iv. 25. *He died for our sins according to the Scriptures*, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *He was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and by his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*, Isa. liii. 5, 6. And *he his own self bare our sins in his body on the tree*, 1 Pet. ii. 24.

6. The death which Christ thus suffered for sins, was in a most proper sense a sin-offering, a sacrifice offered to God, to make atonement and propitiation for sins. This appears,

1. From the testimony of the infallible Spirit of God, which in the holy Scriptures frequently and expressly asserts it. As where, speaking of Christ, he saith, *thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin*, Isa. liii. 10.

and elsewhere, *walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself an offering and sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour*, Eph. v. 2. in allusion to the legal sacrifices which are often said to be of a sweet savour unto the Lord, Lev. i. 9, 13, 17 ii. 2. Gen. viii. 21 The words in the original *וַיְהִי* properly signify a saviour of rest, which God was pleased to accept of, so as to rest and cease from anger. Thus where Christ is said to be *made sin for us*, 2 Cor. v. 21. the meaning is, that he was made a sin-offering, or a sacrifice for our sins ; and so the word is rendered, Heb. x. 6. and should be so, not only in the place before quoted, but likewise Rom. viii. 3. Heb. xiii. 11. For as the Hebrew word *חַטָּאת*, so the Greek *ἁμαρτία*, which answers to it in all these places, signifies a sin-offering, as well as sin, and cannot be here understood in any other sense. The Epistle to the Hebrews all along declares this great truth, as if it was written on purpose to convince us that Christ properly offered up himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and that he did it only once, that being sufficient to expiate the sins of the whole world. For he offered up himself without *spot to God*, Heb. ix. 14. *He needed not daily, as those high-priests, to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and then for the people's ; for this he did once when he offered up himself*, Heb. vii. 27 He offered *one sacrifice for sins*, chap. x. 12. and *by that one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified*, ver. 14. so also chap. ix. 25, 26, 27, 28. From all which it is as plain as words can make it, that God himself looked upon the death of Christ as a true expiatory sacrifice, a sacrifice offered up to him for the sins of the world.

2. This appears also from the nature of such sacrifices under the law. For they were always offered in the stead of him that brought them ; who having, by some sin or breach of God's law, deserved death, he brought some live creature, such as God had appointed in that case, to the priest, to be killed in his stead, and so to

suffer that death which he must otherwise have suffered himself. For God himself saith, *The life or soul of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar, to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul*, Lev. xvii.

11 where we see the reason, why the blood made atonement for the soul of a man, was, because the life or soul of the beast was in it. And so when the beast was offered, the soul of that was given and accepted instead of the soul of the offender that brought it, and therefore it made atonement for his soul. It was his כפרו, his expiation bearing the punishment which his iniquities had deserved: so the Jews commonly used that word, as I observed before. But for this purpose he who brought the sacrifice was to put his hand upon the head of it; *and he shall put his hand*, saith God, *upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him*, Lev. i. 4. It was by this means therefore, even by the person's laying his hand upon the head of his burnt-offering, that it was accepted of for him and in his stead, to make atonement for his sins. This the Jews themselves acknowledge. One of the most learned of them, even Abarbinel, saith expressly, that if the high-priest sinned through ignorance against any of God's commandments, it was but just that he should be punished with death, and his body burnt; but the law required, שיביא פר בן בקר, *החם עצמי יסמך ידי עליו לרמוז שהוא תמורתו*, that he shall bring a young bullock, instead of himself, and shall lay his hands upon him, to signify that this is his substitute, his commutation, or in his place, *Abarb. Pref in Levit.* Hence all the expiatory sacrifices were properly ἀντιψυχὰς, as some of the ancients call them, as being ἀντὶ ψυχῆς, instead of the life of him that brought them. And that is the reason, neither can any other be given, why in capital crimes, as murder, idolatry, and the like, for which the law required that they who committed them should die themselves in their own persons; for them

there was no sacrifice ordained, because the man being to die himself, no beast could be substituted in his place, or die in his stead.

Such were the expiatory sacrifices under the law ; and such was that which Christ offered up to God for us ; he died in our room, and so made atonement or expiation of our sins, as those legal sacrifices are said to have done, or the priest by them, for the sins of those who brought them ; for he suffered *ὑπὲρ ἡμῶν*, for us in the flesh, 1 Pet. iv. 1. *He once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*, 1 Pet. iii. 18. *He died for all*, 2 Cor. v. 14. He died for the *ungodly*, Rom. v. 6. *He tasted death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. He himself saith, *This is my body, which is given for you ; and this cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you*, Luke xxii. 19, 20. To which we may add the place before quoted, where Christ is said to be made sin, or a sin-offering for us, 2 Cor. v. 21. In all which places the original word is *ὑπὲρ*, which is commonly used to signify a commutation, or substitution of one for another. And though in some other places it may, yet in these it cannot be taken in any other sense, this being the only sense that is proper to those places that speak of Christ's dying or suffering for us ; for his death, as we have shewn, was most properly an expiatory sacrifice ; but such sacrifices were offered up for the offender, so as to be substituted in his stead. And therefore, when Christ is said to have suffered for us, it must be so understood, as that he did it in our stead, that being the only sense of the phrase that is proper to such sacrifices.

But, to put the matter quite out of dispute, Christ himself saith, that he came to give himself, *λύτρον ἀντὶ πολλῶν*, a ransom instead of many, Matt. xx. 28. for that this is the proper meaning of the place, is evident, not only from the notion of a ransom, which implies it, but from the particle *ἀντὶ*, which in the Greek tongue usually signifies either contrariety or substitution. But

here it cannot possibly be taken in the first sense, and therefore must be in the latter, even for the commutation or substitution of one in the place of another, that Christ gave his life a ransom instead of many, which must otherwise have died, and so gave his flesh for the life of the world, John vi. 51 To the same purpose is that of St. Paul, where he saith, *that Christ gave himself*, ἀντίλυτρον ὑπὲρ πάντων, *a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 6. A ransom for all, so as to be in the place of all; or, if ye will, a commutative ransom, for so the preposition ἀντί, joined to λύτρον, plainly signifies, and more emphatically than it would have done if used by itself; so that I do not see how it was possible that Christ's dying in our stead could have been revealed more clearly to us by any words whatsoever, than it is by these. And they that strive to wrest these to any other sense, might do as much to any other words that could be used in any language whatsoever; and so would make all words signify nothing but what they themselves please; yea, the sacred oracles of God himself would be written in vain to such people, who take not the sense of them from the words themselves wherein they are delivered to us, but from their own opinions and fancies: how they will answer such an abuse put upon God's word at the last day, I know not, but fear they never think of that.

Moreover, the same thing, that even the death of Christ was properly a sin-offering, or a sacrifice to expiate or make atonement for sin, appears also from the end of such sacrifices under the law; which was, that the sins for which they were brought might be forgiven, and so God reconciled to the person that brought them; for he having redeemed or purchased off that death, which by the law was due unto his sins, by bringing another living creature, according to God's appointment, to suffer it in his stead, the law was now looked upon as satisfied, and he was no longer obliged by it to die for his sins, as he was before, for his sins were forgiven; as it is frequently said in the law, *the priest*

shall make atonement for him, as concerning his sin, and it shall be forgiven, Lev. iv. 26, 31, 35. v. 10, 13. vi. 7, &c. Numb. xv. 25, &c. It shall be forgiven, that is, it shall not be imputed to him, nor laid to his charge, but taken off and removed, or put away from him, as the law speaks, Deut. xxi. 8. so that he shall not die for it; as Nathan said to David, *The Lord hath also put away thy sin, thou shalt not die*, 2 Sam. xii. 13. Thus, when atonement was once made by the sacrifice which any man had offered for his sins, he was thereby redeemed or freed from that death, which he was before obnoxious or subject to, and God, *in whose favour is life*, Psal. xxx. 5. was now reconciled, and become as gracious and propitious again to him, as if he had never been angry or displeased with him. This therefore was the way prescribed in the law, whereby to obtain forgiveness of sins, and reconciliation to God, even by the death or blood of such living creatures as God for that purpose had ordained to be offered to him; as the apostle observes, saying, *And almost all things are by the law purged with blood, and without shedding of blood is no remission*, Heb. ix. 22.

But in this, as well as in other respects, the law had only the shadow of good things to come, typifying and foreshewing the great end, and the glorious effects of the death of Christ, who was the true Lamb of God *that taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. *who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, Tit. ii. 14. *in whom therefore we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins*, Eph. i. 7. Col. i. 14. For this end it was shed, as he himself saith, at the institution of the cup in his last supper, *This is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many, for the remission of sins*, Matt. xxvi. 28. And therefore, as St. John saith, *the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. as well it might: *for if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth*

to the purifying of the flesh ; how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered up himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God ? Heb. ix. 13, 14. So that *being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him*, Rom. v. 9. even from the wrath of God ; *for if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more being reconciled we shall be saved by his life*, ver. 10.

There are several such places in his Epistles, where St. Paul speaks of our reconciliation to God by the death of his Son, as Eph. ii. 16. Col. i. 20, 21 And, lest we should mistake the true notion of reconciliation, he explains it, saying, that *God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them*, 2 Cor. v. 19. For from hence it appears, that by our reconciliation unto God, the apostle means also God's reconciliation unto us, in that he explains it by God's not imputing our sins to us. And to make it yet more plain, he adds, that *Christ was made sin, or a sin-offering for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, ver. 21. For to be made the righteousness of God, is the highest expression that can be of his reconciliation to us, by virtue of that sacrifice which his Son was pleased to offer for us, by dying in our room. To all which I shall add only one place more, and that is, where the apostle saith, *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. whereby we are assured not only of Christ's redemption of us from the curse of the law, but likewise of the manner how he did it, even by being made a curse for us ; that is, by taking it upon himself, and bearing it in our stead. We, by not continuing in all things that are written in the law, are accursed by it : but Christ having suffered the accursed death in our nature and stead, he hath thereby freed our persons from it ; he hath redeemed us from all the curses

which are threatened in the law against those who break it, and restored us to all the blessings which are there promised to those who keep it. This, to me, seems to be the plain and natural sense of the words ; neither do I see how they can possibly bear any other.

I have laid all these places of holy Scripture as near together as I could, that we may at one view behold what firm ground we have to believe, that one great end of Christ's death, and that upon which the rest depend, was to expiate our sins, to discharge us from the guilt we have contracted by them, to redeem us from the punishments which they have made us obnoxious to, to fulfil the word, to satisfy the justice, and to appease the wrath of God against us for them, to make up the breach they had made between him and us, to reconcile him to us, so that he might, without any violation of his word or justice, be merciful and propitious to us, and receive us again into his love and favour, notwithstanding our manifold provocations of him. And this is that which the apostle here means, by saying, that *Jesus Christ the righteous is the propitiation for our sins* ; not he was, but is ; the death, which he once suffered, being a continual propitiation for the sins which we continually commit.

And not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world, which the apostle adds, that we may not think that Christ is thus a propitiation for the sins only of his apostles, or first disciples, or any other particular persons, but for all mankind, from the beginning to the end of the world, which he therefore calls the whole world ; because there never was, nor is, nor will be any man in the world, for whom Christ is not a propitiation. For though he did not actually die till many ages after the beginning of the world, yet his death was as effectual a propitiation for their sins who lived in any of the ages before, as it is for ours who live so many ages after it happened. And the reason is, because it was promised and undertaken by him at the beginning of the

world, so soon as any man had occasion or need of it, when it was said, that *the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head, and the serpent shall bruise his heel*, Gen. iii. 15. As a man may purchase an estate, and have the possession, and the whole benefit of it, many years before he actually pays the price agreed upon for it, if he gives such security for the payment of it as the seller will accept of: so here Christ undertook the redemption of mankind at the beginning of the world, promising or engaging his word to pay the price agreed on at such a time; the Father accepts of his word or promise as a sufficient security, the best indeed that could be given, it being impossible that he should lie. Upon which Christ immediately entered upon his purchase, and by virtue of that blood which he should afterwards shed as the *λύτρον*, or price of redemption for them, he was the propitiation for the sins of all mankind, according to the covenant made and published, first to Adam, afterwards confirmed to Abraham by God in Christ, Gal. iii. 17 who was therefore looked upon as slain for the sins of the world, from the very beginning of it; yea, and is said to be so. For whatsoever some critics, to shew their skill in playing with God's word, have offered to the contrary, that is the plain and literal sense of those words in the Revelations, *whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, chap. xiii. 8. For as for the new sense (if it might be called sense) which they would put upon them, by making the words run thus, *written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain*, it plainly perverts the order in which the Holy Ghost hath placed them, without any reason; for as for that which they usually give, even because it is said upon another occasion, *whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*, Rev. xvii. 8. that is no reason at all: for here is no mention made of the *Lamb slain*, as there is in the other text, which alters

the case much, and shews that the Holy Ghost designed something else in that, than in this, even that the *Lamb was slain from the foundation of the world*, and therefore hath placed the words so, that they cannot without violence have any other sense forced upon them. And after all, take the words how ye will, this great truth is still contained and revealed in them; for if men's names were written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb slain, the Lamb must be supposed to be slain from the foundation of the world, otherwise it could not have been the book of the Lamb as slain. And to that which they bring to invalidate the common reading and most obvious sense of the words, we may oppose another text which confirms it, even where it is said, we are redeemed with the *precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot, who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times*, 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. From whence it appears that Christ was slain, and his blood shed in the decree of God, before the foundation of the world, as he was from the foundation of it, in all the expiatory sacrifices that typified and foreshewed it; for it was his blood only that made them expiatory, without which they could have had no virtue at all to cleanse or expiate sin.

But that the death of Christ was both necessary and effectual for the expiation of sin from the foundation of the world, appears also from the argument which the apostle useth, whereby to prove that Christ need not offer himself often, as the high-priest, who went every year into the holy place with the blood of others, *because he then must often have suffered since the foundation of the world*, Heb. ix. 26. for this argument would have no force at all in it, if the expiation of sin did not depend upon his death all along from the foundation of the world; which therefore he takes for granted by the Hebrews themselves, unto whom he wrote. And this seems to be St. Paul's meaning, where he saith, that

Christ was set forth a propitiation for the remission of sins past, Rom. iii. 25. even of those which were committed before he suffered. Be sure St. Peter could mean nothing else, where, speaking of the fathers before Christ, he saith, *but we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they*, Acts xv. 11. καὶ ὃν τρόπον κακῆνοι, after the same manner as they; which plainly shews, that they who lived before, and they who lived after Christ, were all saved after one and the same manner, even by the means of that death which he suffered for the sins of the world. He being the *Lamb of God*, the only *Lamb that taketh away the sin of the world*, John i. 29. or, as it is in my text, *the sins of the whole world*; the whole race of mankind, from first to last. He gave himself *a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 9. *He tasted death for every man*, Heb. ii. 9. not only for this, or that, or the other man, but for every man in the world. And the reason is, because, as I observed before, he did not take upon him the nature of any one or more particular men only, but the common nature of all mankind, the same that every man is of. And therefore every man hath an equal right and title to all the merits of the death which Christ suffered in that nature. And every man may and ought to believe that Christ died for him, as St. Paul did, where, speaking of Christ, he saith, *who loved me, and gave himself for me*, Gal. ii. 20. and every man that truly believeth in him, shall most certainly be pardoned and saved by him; for he himself hath said, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. where we see God hath made no exception against any person in the world; and therefore no man ought to except against himself, or any other, but every man is bound by the word of God to believe, that whosoever believeth in him, according to the same word, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.

By this we see what reason we have to believe that

Jesus Christ is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and, by consequence, how truly he is called the Saviour of the world, John iv. 14, 42. Neither is there salvation in any other; *for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved*, Acts iv. 12. But by him there is no man but may be saved; for God is now so far from excluding any, that he hath declared, that *he would have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth*, 1 Tim. ii. 4. *not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*, 2 Pet. iii. 9. which shews that God is so far reconciled to all mankind, by the death which his Son underwent for all, that he would have all men to be saved by it. And so indeed all in some sense are, at least for some time; for there is no man but is saved from some trouble or other, and all men are saved for some time from that everlasting fire which *is prepared for the devil and his angels*, which would never have been, if Christ had not been a propitiation for their sins; for without that no man could ever have received any sort of deliverance or salvation, nor any mercy or favour at all from the hands of God, but all men must immediately have been condemned to the aforesaid *everlasting fire*; as is plain from those for whom it was prepared, even *the devil and his angels*. For they were the workmanship of God's own hand, as well as men are, and were made as knowing, as wise, as good, every way as excellent creatures as were ever made by him, and therefore might very well expect as much favour from him as any other; but notwithstanding, *God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment*, 2 Pet. ii. 4. And all this immediately upon their sinning against him; so that he never was merciful, or gracious, or long-suffering, or abundant in goodness and truth to them; he never forgave any one iniquity, transgression, or sin, that any of them were guilty of; he never had

any pity or compassion of them, nor shewed them any kindness or mercy at all from that time to this, nor ever will. Which to me is as clear a demonstration as the thing is capable of, that all the mercy that God shewed to mankind is wholly upon the account of Christ our Saviour; if he had taken upon him the angelic, and not the human nature, God would have been merciful to the angels only, and not to men; but all mankind must have been in the same condition wherein the fallen angels now are; but seeing he took not on him the nature of angels, but the seed of Abraham, therefore God is merciful to men only, and not at all to the angels; to never a one of them, but to all men; they all live some time on earth, and not in hell; they are all here free from many of the punishments that might justly be inflicted on them; they all enjoy more or less of the good things of this life. Though all have some, none have all the troubles they have deserved. And though none may have all they desire, all have more than they deserve of outward and temporal blessings; yea, God is so merciful to all men, so long as they are upon earth, that they are all the while in a capacity of attaining everlasting life and happiness; all which mercies must be ascribed wholly to the great propitiation which Christ had made for their sins, without which they could neither have had any mercy, nor have been capable of having any at all; no more than the apostate angels are, for want of a Saviour.

From whence we may see into the apostle's meaning, where he saith, that *God is the Saviour of all men, especially of those that believe*, 1 Tim. iv. 10. For all men partake more or less of the benefits of that death which God the Son was pleased to suffer for them, and so he is one way or other a Saviour of them all; but in a more especial manner of those who believe, for to them *he is the Author of eternal salvation*; and if he be not so to others, it is only because they do not believe in him; for, as we heard even now, we have God's

own word for it, that *whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life*. And therefore nothing can ever hinder any men from being saved by him, but their not believing in him.

It was by unbelief that the first Adam, and in him all mankind, was at first destroyed; and Christ, the second Adam, having done all that was necessary on his part to restore them to their first estate, he requires no more of them in order to it, than not to continue in unbelief, but to believe God's holy word, and what is there said concerning him their Saviour, so as to believe in him as their Saviour, and accordingly to trust and depend upon him for all things necessary for their salvation; if we do this, we shall certainly be saved. For this being the condition required on our part, by thus believing in him we apply to ourselves the merits of that death which he suffered for all. The propitiation, which he hath made for the sins of the world in general, being hereby made over to us in particular, for the pardon of our sins, and for God's reconciliation unto us: as under the law, when a man had committed a sin, if he brought his sin-offering, and laid his hands upon the head of it, and slew it, testifying thereby his belief that God would, according to his word, accept of the death of that beast instead of his, the priest with the blood of his said sin-offering made atonement for his sins, and particularly for that for which he brought the offering. So he, who by faith lays hold upon the sacrifice which Christ hath offered for the sins of the world, trusting, or, as the prophet speaks, staying, or leaning upon that alone for the expiation of his sins, he thereby becomes interested in it, it is his sacrifice, his sins are expiated by it, God accepting now of that death which Christ suffered in his nature, instead of that which he must otherwise have suffered in his own person: and God being now reconciled to him by the death of his Son, upon his intercession, by virtue of his said death, he gives his Holy Spirit to such a believer, to enlighten,

quicken, sanctify, and assist him in ordering his whole conversation for the future, as becomes the Gospel of Christ.

And hence it is, that although our reconciliation to God depends wholly upon our believing in his Son, yet no man can thus believe in him, but he will likewise obey and serve him; and whosoever doth not do so, may be confident that he doth not believe aright; for, if he did, his sins would be all pardoned, which it is plain they are not; for if his sins were all pardoned, or taken away by the blood of Christ, then God would be reconciled to him; and if God was reconciled to him, he would most certainly give him grace to live according to his laws; if God justified, or accounted him righteous by the merits of his Son, he would also sanctify or make him righteous by the power of his Holy Spirit. And therefore, although faith and obedience be two distinct things in the notion, they are never separated in the subject, but always go together, or rather the one always follows upon the other, obedience upon faith. No man can obey God, unless he believe in Christ; and no man can believe in Christ, but he will obey God; for true faith always works by love, Gal. v. 6. but *love is the fulfilling of the whole law*, Rom. xiii. 10. Matt. xxii. 37, 39. or the doing of all such good works as God hath there prepared for us to walk in. So that, as our church hath rightly declared, “although good works, which are the fruit of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God’s judgments, yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit.” Art. XII.

But though he who believes in Christ cannot but obey him, yet it is not by his obedience, but faith, that he partakes of that propitiation which Christ hath made for the sins of the world; *for we are partakers of Christ,*

saith the apostle, *if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*, Heb. iii. 14. If we continue confident and fully persuaded in our minds that Christ died for our sins, so as stedfastly to trust on him for pardon and grace, and all things necessary to our salvation, we thereby partake of the merits of his death, and shall be accordingly pardoned and sanctified, and saved by him. And, that we may have ground sufficient whereupon to build this our most holy faith, the infallible Spirit of God assures us in my text, that *Christ is the propitiation for our sins*; and that we may not doubt but he is so for ours, as well as others, he acquaints us moreover, that he is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world, and therefore for ours be sure among the rest; that we, as well as any others, may comfort and support ourselves with it under the weight and burden of our sins.

And so certainly we both may and ought to do; considering what I promised to shew in the next place, that Christ being thus a propitiation for our sins, he is therefore a most powerful Advocate with the Father for us. *If any man sin*, saith the apostle, *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; and he is the propitiation for our sins*. He first tells us, for our comfort, that Jesus Christ is our Advocate; and then how he becomes to be so, such an Advocate, that we may confidently rely upon him for the pardon of our sins, even because he is the propitiation for them. For having offered up himself as a sacrifice for our sins, and so undergone the punishment which was due unto us for them, he is thereby fully capacitated and enabled to be our Advocate with the Father, to plead our cause, and to make effectual intercession with him for the pardon of those sins which we have committed, but for which he hath suffered.

To explain this more fully, I need not trouble you with any critical observations about the Greek word *παράκλητος*, here used; for in this place it is rightly trans-

lated, according to the most usual signification of the word, *an advocate*, one who undertakes the defence of a person accused of some crime, to bring him off, that he may not be condemned, or, at least, not have the sentence executed upon him for it. Such a one, saith the apostle, is Jesus Christ with the Father for us ; and therefore, in other places, he is said to be the Mediator between God and us, to make intercession for us, to mediate, or interpose himself, so as to make up the difference betwixt his Father and us, that he may not be angry with us, nor punish us, as we have deserved, for our sins, but discharge or acquit us for them, so as to be reconciled and well pleased again with us, and receive us into the same favour we should have had with him if we had never offended him.

But there are three things especially to be observed in this case. First, that Christ is thus our Advocate by virtue of the propitiation, or propitiatory sacrifice which he hath offered for our sins, as was typified also under the law ; when a man had committed a sin, it was not presently forgiven him upon his offering and slaying a beast for it ; but when the beast was slain, and the priest was appointed to take some of the blood, and present it some way or other in the tabernacle before the Lord, and by that means made his atonement for the sin that it might be forgiven. So that none but the priest could make the atonement, nor he any other way than by means of the sacrifice that was offered for the sin. So here, Christ having offered himself as a sacrifice for our sins, our sins are not thereby immediately pardoned, but he, as our Priest, by virtue of that sacrifice, propitiates, atones, or reconcileth his Father to us, interceding with him to accept of that death which he had suffered, instead of that which we had deserved, and so obtains our pardon or forgiveness.

But the clearest type or representation of this under the law, was upon the day of expiation, only once a year, when the high-priest made atonement for the sins

of all the people ; they having brought him two goats, he cast lots upon them which should be for the sin-offering, and which for a scape-goat ; the first he himself killed, and brought the blood of it into the most holy place within the veil, and there sprinkled it upon the mercy-seat, and before it, and so made atonement for himself, his household, and all the congregation of Israel, Lev. xvi. 15, 17 And, to shew that their sins were not forgiven, he then took the scape-goat, and laying both his hands upon the head of the goat, he confessed over him all the iniquities of the children of Israel, putting them upon the head of the goat, and so sent him away into the wilderness, and the goat, saith the text, *shall bear upon him all their iniquities, unto a land not inhabited*, ver. 22. that is, into a place where they shall never be heard of any more. Now all this was only a figure of what Christ was to do for us : *for he*, as the apostle saith, *being come an High-priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us*, Heb. ix. 11, 12. He by his own blood having obtained our redemption, by virtue of that he entered into the holy place, not that made with hands, *but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us*, ver. 24. And there he continues to execute his priestly office ; for if he were on earth he should not be a Priest any longer, Heb. viii. 4. For, when he had offered up his sacrifice, he had done all that the high-priest had to do, until he went into the holy place. But being now in heaven, he there, as our High-priest, continually makes atonement and propitiation by the virtue of his blood for our sins, and that so effectually, that they are carried away nobody knows where, they will never be heard of any more, so as to rise up in judgment against us. And hence it is, that he is so powerful an Advocate with the Father for us ; because

he having paid the full price of our redemption, he hath that always to plead for us ; or, as St. Paul words it, *he is the one Mediator betwixt God and man, having given himself a ransom for all*, 1 Tim. ii. 5, 6. And so as *he was delivered for our offences, he rose again for our justification*, Rom. iv. 25. He rose again, and ascended up to heaven, there to justify us from our sins, by means of that death which he had suffered for them.

The next thing to be observed here is, that Christ doth this for us continually. The apostle here saith, *we have an Advocate*, we have one now *with the Father* ; and so may all believers in all ages every moment say, we have at this present an Advocate in heaven, and he now appears in the presence of God for us. It was not so under the law, when the priests could make atonement only now and then, and the high-priest only once a year ; but there was then some shadow of it in the continual burnt-offerings, and the fire that was always burning upon the altar ; but most especially in the propitiatory, or mercy-seat, that was always in the most holy place ; for which we must know that Christ is not only called *ἱλασμός*, the propitiation of our sins in my text ; and again, 1 John iv. 10. but he is called *ἱλαστήριον*, which we translate propitiation, *whom God hath set forth a propitiation*, Rom. iii. 25. But it properly signifies the propitiatory, answering to the Hebrew *כַּסֵּת*, the *mercy-seat*, which was the cover to the ark, or chest, in which the two tables of the covenant, or the law written with the finger of God, was always kept. To this ark, made of shittim wood, God commanded a cover to be made of pure gold, exactly of the same dimensions with the ark, two cubits and an half long, and one and an half broad, Exod. xxv. 10, 17. This cover was called the propitiatory, or mercy-seat ; and it was upon this that the blood of the sin-offering was sprinkled by the high-priest on the day of expiation. At the two ends of this mercy-seat were two cherubims placed of

beaten gold, one at the one end, and the other at the other end; and they were so ordered that their wings overshadowed the mercy-seat, and their faces both looked down towards it; and between these two cherubims, above the mercy-seat, God was pleased in a peculiar and wonderful manner to reside, to give his answers, and shew himself propitious to his people; *and there*, saith he, *I will meet with thee, and will commune with thee*, ver 22. Now all this was done to foreshew and typify our Advocate with the Father, the true mercy-seat of pure gold, all over pure and holy, set between God and his law, to cover, as it were, and hide the law from him, that he might not see how much we had broken it. This propitiatory, or mercy-seat, was just of the same dimensions with the ark in which the law was kept, to shew that Christ should exactly observe the law for us in his life, and that the propitiation which he should make for us by his death, should be as broad and as long as our transgressions of it. It was from this mercy-seat that God shewed himself propitious to his people, to put them and us in mind, that all the mercy and favour that he shews us comes to us only by Jesus Christ. Upon the day of expiation the high-priest sprinkled the blood of the sin-offering upon the mercy-seat, and so made atonement for the sins of the people, to shew that Christ, our true High-priest, makes atonement for us, or reconciles his Father to us, by virtue of that blood which he shed for our sins: the faces of the cherubims were always looking towards the mercy-seat, to shew that the angels themselves admire those great mysteries of the Gospel of Christ, and man's redemption by him; to which St. Peter alludes, where, speaking of the Gospel, he saith, *which things the angels desire to look into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. It was from the mercy-seat that God met and communed with his people, to shew that it is only by Christ that he makes known his will, and manifesteth his love and kindness to us. The place where the mercy-seat stood was

called the holy of holies, or the most holy place, as being a type of that where our Advocate is now sitting at the right hand of God, *who is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself*, Heb. ix. 24. But that which is most observable to our present purpose is, that although the high-priest went in to make atonement for the people, by sprinkling blood upon it only once a year, yet the mercy-seat, or propitiatory itself always stood in the same place between the majesty of God, sitting betwixt the cherubim above it, and his law lying in the ark below it; and the blood which was sprinkled upon it once a year, was never wiped of, but remained upon it all the year long; which was so clear and exact a type of Christ, that he is called by the same name, the *propitiatory*, the *mercy-seat*, or, as the apostle speaks, *the throne of grace*, where grace and mercy sits in all its glory, and whereby alone we can ever obtain mercy, *and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. Whereby was plainly represented Christ's continual intercession or mediation between God and us, and the means also whereby he makes it so effectual, even his blood, which though he shed, not once a year, but once only for all, yet the virtue of it is always remaining before God in heaven. By this, he sitting as it were between God and us, quenches the fire of his wrath against us for breaking his law, propitiates and reconciles him to us, procures the gifts and graces of his Holy Spirit for us, obtains his favour to accept of what we do, and to justify or account us righteous in him, notwithstanding our manifold imperfections. By this he defends his church and all the true members of it, and makes all things work together for their good; in short, by this he always continues to do every thing for us that is any way necessary to our obtaining eternal salvation by him, and therefore is able to save them to the uttermost *that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25.

And this brings me to the third and last thing to be here observed concerning our Advocate, that he makes intercession *for those that come unto God by him*, for those who believe in him, and so turn to God by him; for them, for all them he makes intercession, but for none else. And so in my text, *we*, saith the apostle, *have an Advocate* with the Father, we who are his faithful servants and disciples, we have an Advocate to intercede for us, but no other have one but we, and such as we are. That this is his meaning appears from his saying afterwards, that he is the propitiation not only for our sins, but also for the whole world; whereby he plainly asserts that Christ died not only for believers, but for all mankind; but he doth not say so of his intercession, not we have an Advocate, and not only we, but the whole world; but only we, we Christians, we believers, we the disciples of Jesus Christ, we, and none but we, have him for our Advocate with the Father: and so in other places of Scripture, though Christ be often said to have died for the world, and for all men, yet he is never said to intercede for all, or for the world in general, or for any but those who believe in him.

The prophet indeed saith, that *he maketh intercession for the transgressors*, Isa. liii. 12. But admitting the translation, this is generally interpreted only of that intercession he made upon the cross at his death, which the prophet there speaks of, when he prayed the Father to forgive those which crucified him, not of that which he makes in heaven. And if it should be understood of that, he there also maketh intercession for transgressors; he can make it for no other; for none but transgressors have need of an intercessor; but he makes it only for such transgressors as believe in him for the pardon of their transgressions, and for grace to serve God, and keep his law for the future; such transgressors come to God by him, and therefore he maketh intercession for them, as St. Paul saith he doth for the *saints*, Rom. viii. 27 And afterwards speaking of himself, and all true

Christians, and of Christ's dying for them, he adds, *who also maketh intercession for us*, ver. 34. But it is nowhere said that he doth it for the world; but, on the contrary, he himself saith plainly that he doth not, where, speaking to the Father concerning his disciples, he saith, *I pray for them, I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me*, John xvii. 9, 20. I know these words are commonly brought as the great argument to prove that Christ did not die for all, because he doth not here pray for all, but only for his disciples; but this is a mere fallacy; for he doth not speak one word of his death, but only of his intercession; he doth not say, I will not die, but I do not pray for the world, but for those which thou hast given me. He hath said elsewhere as plainly as he could speak, both with his own mouth, and by his apostles, that *he gave his flesh for the life of the world*; that *he gave himself a ransom for all*, and the like. But here he saith, and hath left it upon record, that we may all know, that notwithstanding that he died for the world, yet he doth not pray or intercede for the world, but *for those only which are given him out of the world*, even such as believe in him, and come unto God by him; as the high-priest made atonement only for the children of Israel.

And hence it is, that although many of those for which Christ died, shall notwithstanding perish eternally, as the apostle plainly intimates, by saying, *Destroy not him by thy meat for whom Christ died*, Rom. xiv. 15. and again, *Through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish, for whom Christ died*, 1 Cor. viii. 11 yet none of those who believe in him shall perish, but they shall, according to his word, *all have everlasting life*, because *he ever lives to make intercession for them*; and he never intercedes in vain; the Father always hears him, John xi. 42. inasmuch, that if he interceded, as he died for the whole world, the whole world would be saved: and the only reason why any are not saved by him is, because they will not believe and trust on him

as their Saviour, so as to take his yoke upon them, and do what he hath required in order to it ; and therefore although he died, yet he will not intercede for them, but leaves them to perish in their sins. And so they lose all the benefit of his death by their own obstinacy and unbelief.

I have endeavoured to make this as plain as I could in so few words, because it is a thing that is but very seldom, if ever, considered as it ought ; and yet there is nothing of greater use and comfort to us. As for the use, we may learn from hence how indispensably necessary it is to believe in our blessed Saviour, and to use all means to come up to the terms which he hath propounded to us in his Gospel ; for otherwise, although he be the propitiation for our sins, yet we shall not have him to be our Advocate with the Father ; and if he do not take our cause in hand, if he do not intercede for us, if he doth not propitiate and reconcile his Father to us, by the blood which he shed for our sins, all the world cannot help us, but we ourselves must die in our sins, and have our portion with unbelievers, in that *everlasting fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels*.

But as for the comfort which this great doctrine affords to all true believers, that is the last thing I promised to shew from these words, and that for which the apostle at first wrote, *If any man sin*, saith he, *we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous*, such an Advocate as is himself the propitiation for our sins, and such a propitiation as is sufficient to propitiate the Father, not only for our sins, *but for the sins of the whole world* ; but we have all sinned, we have all done wickedly, we have all broken the laws of God, we have all done what we ought not to do, and we have all left undone what we ought to do, and so we have all sinned against God, and incensed his wrath against us ; we have all forfeited our lives to him, and he may justly destroy us when he pleaseth ; we lie perfectly at his mercy ; but how can we expect to find any mercy at his

hands ? what have we to plead for it ? Shall we plead the many services we have done him, the good works we have performed for him ? What services did we ever do him, what works did we ever perform to him, more than we were bound in duty to do, whether we had ever sinned against him or no ? How then can they satisfy his justice, or appease his anger for our sins, although they were all as perfect and exact as his law required them to be ? But alas ! all the good works we ever did, are at most but few, and at the best but bad, far short of what they ought to have been ; and therefore are so far from meriting the pardon of our sins, that they themselves want one ; being in strictness of justice no better than sins themselves ; so that we never did any thing so well, but God might justly condemn us for it.

But how then shall we support ourselves, so as not to sink down into despair under the weight and burden of our sins ? Shall we do it with the consideration of God's infinite mercy ? It is true he is infinitely merciful, but he is infinitely just too ; and though he be infinitely just in himself, he is infinitely merciful only in his Son. And therefore, when we have done all we can, we must fly unto him for refuge, without whom God never did, nor ever will shew mercy to any of his creatures that have sinned against him ; as we have all done, and therefore without him must of necessity be undone for ever.

But, howsoever, let us not despond or despair of mercy, though we can have none without Christ ; there is none but we may have it by him ; he hath purchased all mercy for us with his own blood ; he hath borne the punishment of our sins ; he hath pacified the anger of his Father against us ; he hath propitiated or reconciled him to us ; for *he was the propitiation for our siles* and is now our Advocate to plead it for us, and to *ns,* ply it to us, that our sins may be pardoned and forg ap-
by it. iven

This therefore is that which the apostle here pro-

pounds as the only comfort that a sinner hath ; and it is certainly the greatest we can ever have ; for seeing we have such an Advocate with the Father, *Jesus Christ the righteous*, we cannot fail of God's mercy in the pardon of our sins, if we repent and believe the Gospel ; as I promised to shew in the last place. But this follows so necessarily from what we have already discoursed upon this divine subject, that I need do no more now, than only to demonstrate what an extraordinary comfort this is to us under the sense of the many sins that we have committed against God our maker. And that will sufficiently appear, if we do but consider the many great and most glorious effects of that intercession, which *Jesus Christ* our Advocate is always making in heaven for all that truly believe in him.

For this purpose, therefore, let us apprehend our blessed Saviour as now exalted at the right hand of God, above all principalities and powers, and every name that is named in the highest heavens, and there managing the great affairs of his church in general, and of every sound member of it in particular, that none who believe in him might perish, but that all of them may have *everlasting life*. The first thing he doth is to take care that the blood he shed upon earth may not be spilt in vain, but applied to the use for which he shed it, even for the pardon of the sins that such persons have been guilty of : he sees they have been guilty not only of original, but of many actual sins in the course of their lives. He hath taken notice of them all along, and knows them all and every one, to an idle word or vain thought. And seeing his Father displeased with them for not observing the laws which he hath set them, and his hand stretched out to punish them for it, he, as the Mediator, to keep off the stroke, interposeth himself ; he steps in, as it were, between the Father and them, shewing him the wounds which were made in his hands, and feet, and side, for them ; how he hath undergone that death which the law had threatened against them, and

undergone it for them, and in their stead, and therefore intercedes that his death may be accepted of instead of theirs, and the punishments which he hath suffered for their sins. instead of those they had deserved by them : upon which the Father, to speak after the manner of men, approves of what his Son pleads for them, declaring himself satisfied with the propitiation which he had made for the sins of the world ; and seeing these are owned by his Son himself to believe in him, and to be real members of his body, in that he is become their Advocate, therefore upon his intercession he discharges and absolves them from all their sins ; he draws in his hand, and lays aside the wrath he had conceived against them, so as to be as propitious and gracious to them as if he had never been angry or displeased with them ; by which means they are now out of all danger : all their obligations to the punishments which they had deserved by their sins being now cancelled and made void, by the most powerful intercession of their Advocate with the Father for them.

And if this be not a comfort, an exceeding comfort to all true believers, for my part I know not what is. For now their hearts may be at ease, the sins which they have hitherto committed and repented of being now so perfectly pardoned and done away, that none of them can ever rise up in judgment against them, either to shame them in this, or to condemn them in the world to come. And although, do what they can, they will be sometimes apt to fall into one sin or other, so long as they are in this imperfect state, they need not fear but their Advocate will take care that it shall not be their ruin, he being ready upon all occasions to make up the breach, and to reconcile his Father to them.

And yet that is not all neither ; for he, by his intercession, doth not only prevent the execution of the sentence which the law hath passed upon them as criminals, but he prevails so far, that notwithstanding they are still imperfect in themselves, yet they are accounted as just

and righteous persons in him, and that before God himself; who, as the apostle saith, *made him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. This was one great end both of the sacrifice which he once offered, and of the intercession he is always making for them, that as their sins were imputed unto him, so his righteousness might be imputed to them, that their sins might not be only pardoned, but likewise their persons justified or declared righteous in the court of heaven; which he therefore sees accordingly done; interceding continually with the Father, that not only his death but his righteousness also may be accepted of for them; *that they may be found in him, not having their own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. By which means they are now no longer reckoned among the men of this world, but of the communion of saints, of the household of God, his righteous servants, his sons, his heirs, his elect, his special and peculiar people; which must needs be acknowledged to be as great a comfort and happiness as any man can have on this side heaven. I am sure St. Paul thought so, when he gloried and triumphed in this above all things in the world, saying, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died; yea, rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

But then we must further observe, that, to make his intercession always effectual for their pardon and justification before God, he always takes effectual care also that they themselves may perform whatsoever is required by the terms of the new covenant in order to it. As first, that they repent of those sins for which he intercedes, that they may be pardoned; for without repentance there can be no remission: he himself hath said,

Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish, Luke xiii. 2, 5. and therefore we can have no ground to hope that he will intercede for the pardon of our sins, except we repent of them. But our comfort is, that we have not an *High-priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin*, Heb. iv. 15. He having taken our nature upon him while he was upon earth, where we now are, he was subject to all the common infirmities of it; to hunger, and thirst, and weariness, and sorrow, and the like; and was also assaulted with all sorts of temptations which such infirmities make men liable to; and it is particularly noted of him, as a thing extraordinary and peculiar to him, that he notwithstanding was without sin; but he being still in the same nature, although free from all such infirmities, yet he is still sensible we cannot be so, but that his most faithful disciples, which strive all they can to walk exactly in the ways that he hath set them, will sometimes step aside, or stumble and fall down into one sin or other; and if they should lie or continue in it, and not rise up again by an hearty and sincere repentance, they must inevitably perish; and therefore he takes care all along to keep their consciences awake, to check them for their sins, to arm them against temptation, to quicken and strengthen their resolutions of obedience and watchfulness, and so supplies them from time to time with grace to repent, that they may be pardoned: for that this is one great end of Christ's exaltation at the right hand of God, is plain from the apostle, saying, *Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31.

But although they by Christ's assistance live in such a continual exercise of repentance for the sins and infirmities they are continually subject to, yet, after all, if their faith fail, they can never be pardoned and justified before God; and yet they are in great danger of

this too, by reason of the many temptations to which they are daily exposed in this world; which may sometimes be so strong and violent, as to be ready to shake the strongest faith, and to destroy it too, if it be not supported by an almighty hand. But their comfort is, that they have an Advocate in heaven, *who was in all things made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful High-priest in things pertaining unto God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people; for in that he himself hath suffered, being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted*, Heb. ii. 17, 18. He knows by his own experience, how busy the devil is to tempt men to unbelief, to mistrust the word of God, or to pervert it to a wrong sense, that they may not rightly believe in it; he himself was so tempted, and therefore is able to succour them that are so; so able as to be willing also, and ready upon all occasions to do it for all his faithful disciples, as we see he did it for St. Peter, saying, *Simon, Simon, satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat, but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not*, Luke xxii. 31, 32. By this means St. Peter recovered himself from the great temptation that he afterwards fell into; his faith, though shaken, never failed, but he lived and died both in it and for it. Thus it is that Christ always intercedes for his faithful servants: he prayeth that their faith fail not, and so keeps them duly qualified for the pardon and justification which he hath purchased, and now solicits for them.

For these, therefore, and such like ends and purposes, he, having propitiated and reconciled his Father to them, sends down the Holy Spirit upon them, to enlighten, quicken, assist, direct, sanctify, and govern them through the whole course of their lives. This he himself promised when he was upon earth, saying, *I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, even the Spirit of truth*, John xiv. 16. For though this promise was made chiefly to the apostles and their succes-

sors in the government and ministry of the church, yet it had respect also to all true believers in it, as appears from this saying, *He that believeth on me, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living waters*, chap. vii. 38. For, as St. John assures us, *he spake this of the Spirit, which they that believe in him should receive : for the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified*, ver. 39. From whence it appears also, that the coming of the Holy Spirit upon believers is the effect of Christ's intercession in heaven for them. And this seems to be the reason why, soon after his ascension, he sent down the Holy Spirit in so visible and wonderful a manner, that all might take notice that they are beholden to his intercession for all the spiritual gifts and graces which they are endued with.

Of this he himself hath given us a specimen in the intercession he made for his disciples a little before his passion, saying to his Father, *I pray not that thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that thou shouldest keep them from the evil : sanctify them through thy truth ; thy word is truth*, John xvii. 15, 17. *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word*, ver. 20. Thus he then did, and thus he always intercedes for them, that they may be preserved and sanctified by the Spirit of truth, which proceeding from him, as well as from the Father, is diffused into all the sound members of that body of which he is head ; whereby they are fortified against all temptations, and enabled to do whatsoever is required of them. As St. Paul found by experience, saying, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13.

This cannot be better explained than by the sun in the firmament ; which is not only the fountain of all the light and heat that is upon the earth, but the chief cause, under the first, that animals live, and plants grow, and bring forth fruit upon it : now, what the sun is to the earth, that is Christ to his church. *Unto you*, saith

the prophet, *that fear my name, shall the Sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings ; and ye shall go forth and grow up as calves of the stalls*, Mal. iv. 2. All acknowledge this to be understood of Christ ; he therefore is the Sun shining most gloriously in the highest heavens ; he is *the Sun of righteousness*, the fountain of all the righteousness that is in his church ; all the spiritual light and heat, all the knowledge and grace that believers have to be or to do good, it all proceeds from him, rising upon them with healing in his wings, the sweet influences of his blessed Spirit moving upon them, and so healing their distempers, and guiding, exciting, and empowering them to grow up and abound in virtue and good works. So that whensoever we see the sun, it should put us in mind of our Saviour and Advocate, the Sun of righteousness, shining forth in all his glory in the heaven of heavens, and from thence darting down, and displaying the beams of his marvellous light and grace continually upon his church, and all that live and believe in it, to impregnate, quicken, and strengthen them, so that they may bring forth love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance, and all the fruits of the blessed Spirit. And though, after all, such is their weakness and frailty, that they can bring forth none to perfection, yet such is his power and glory, that he improves and perfumes them with the sweet odours of his own merits, and by that means presents them so unto his Father, that he smells a sweet savour from them, and accepts of them as well as if they were in all respects most absolutely pure and perfect.

Another great advantage of our having such an Advocate and High-priest in heaven is, that now we may, as the apostle speaks, *come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*, Heb. iv. 16. where he seems to allude to the propitiatory under the law, or the mercy-seat, where God was pleased to reside or sit between the

cherubim, and from thence to shew mercy, and give his answers to the questions and petitions which his people put up to him, as we often read he did in the Old Testament ; this, as I observed before, was a type of Christ ; he is the true mercy-seat, or, as the apostle calls it, *the throne of grace* ; it is by him only that we can obtain mercy, and *find grace to help in time of need* ; but by him we may always have it ; for *by him we have access unto the Father*, Eph. ii. 18. By him we may apply ourselves upon all occasions unto God, with an humble confidence, that *whatsoever we ask in his name he will give it us*, for he himself hath said it, John xvi. 23. and is always ready to make it good ; which is an unspeakable comfort and encouragement to all true believers ; for having such an Advocate always with the Father for them, and using his name in all their addresses to him, they can never pray in vain, nor want any thing that is good for them ; for it is but asking, and they have it. By which means, as they desire, so they have all things to work together for their good, by his all-powerful intercession, *who hath all things under his feet, and is the head over all things to, or for, the church*, Eph. i. 22.

But to speak particularly of all the benefits we receive by Christ's intercession would be endless, for there is no end of them. They are so many, that they cannot be numbered ; so great, that they cannot be weighed ; and so durable, that they will last for ever. All the blessings that we ever had, or have, or hope for, come to us only this way ; but there is none that God himself can give us, but we may have them by means of our Advocate's intercession for us, who takes that continual care of all which truly believe and trust on him, that he supplies them continually with all things necessary to their obtaining the end of their faith, *even the eternal salvation of their souls* by him in the highest heavens ; he is gone thither before on purpose to prepare a place for them. *In my Father's house*, saith he, *are many*

mansions : if it was not so, I would have told you ; I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also, John xiv. 2, 3.

As he did not die, so neither did he go up to heaven for himself, but for his faithful people, to do all things necessary, and to make all things ready for their coming to him, and living for ever with him ; which that they may, he himself prayed when he was upon earth, *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory which thou hast given me, John xvii. 24.* And so he still continues to intercede for them, not by making any formal supplication, but only signifying his will what he would have for them ; he need do no more, his will being always fulfilled. And therefore seeing he wills that they whom the Father hath given him should be with him, we may be confident they shall be always with him, and enjoy him for ever, and all by the means of his intercession for them. To which the apostle therefore ascribes the whole accomplishment of our salvation, saying, *Wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25.*

If people would but seriously consider these things, they would need no other arguments to persuade them to do all they can to get into the number of these blessed souls, which have such an Advocate always interceding in heaven for them. They would leave no stone unturned, neglect no opportunities or means of attaining a quick and lively faith in him, such a faith as would be a principle of new life in them, and put them upon sincere obedience to the whole law of God. They would fast and pray most earnestly for it, they would read and hear God's holy word to beget it, and often receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper to confirm and strengthen it in them. They would think nothing too great to do,

nothing too hard to suffer, nothing too dear to part with for it. And when they have it, they would not, for they need not, envy the greatest monarch upon earth, as such, their estate being as much beyond his, as heaven is above the earth. Indeed they are the only happy persons in the world, the only persons that know what true joy and comfort means : for all the rest of mankind are in the gall of bitterness, and the bond of iniquity, subject continually to the torments of a guilty conscience, to the wrath of God, and to all the curses written in his law, so as to stand upon the brink of the bottomless pit, ready every moment to be thrown into it ; whilst these in the mean time are out of all danger. For though they also have sinned, *yet they have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous ; and he is the propitiation for their sins*, and by virtue of that is continually making intercession for them. By which means they have Almighty God, the supreme Governor of the world, reconciled to them, and well pleased with them ; they are pardoned, they are absolved from all their sins ; they are justified or accounted righteous before him ; their names are written in the book of life, and enrolled in the catalogue of saints, God's faithful and obedient servants ; their consciences are always kept awake, ready upon all occasions to check them for their sins, and to put them upon the exercise of repentance unto life ; their faith will never fail, *their hearts being always fixed, trusting in God* their Saviour ; they have the grace of Christ always sufficient for them, and his power resting upon them, and so can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth them ; they are illuminated with all necessary knowledge ; they are guided into all truth ; they are assisted in all their actions, they are comforted in all their troubles ; they are cleansed and sanctified wholly by the Spirit of God himself ; they can go boldly to the throne of grace, and are sure to have whatsoever they ask, that is truly good for them ; they have the whole creation at their service,

and all things working together for their advantage ; they need not fear, but desire to go out of this miserable and naughty world, for they shall certainly go to a better, where they will find a place ready prepared for them by Christ himself, that they may live with him, and be as happy as he can make them for evermore ; and all because he is their Advocate with the Father, and is always making intercession for them.

Tell me now, all ye that admire this world, what is there in it comparable to an interest in Christ our Saviour ? Where will ye find a friend that can do so much for you, as he both can and will, if ye do but believe as ye ought in him ? And therefore if ye have any regard to your own good, if any love for yourselves, if ever ye desire to be truly happy, make it your constant care and study to believe in him as the great Prophet of the world, so as to be fully persuaded of the truth of all that he hath said ; to believe in him as your great High-priest and Advocate, so as to trust in him to make reconciliation for you, and to believe in him as your Lord and King, so as to obey and serve him : do but this, and I dare assure you in his name ye will find all that I have said to be not only true, but far short of what he will do for you ; so as to be able to say with the apostle, Rom. viii. 35, 37, 38, 39. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword ? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. To whom, &c.*

SERMON LXX.

AN EASTER SERMON.

I COR. xv. 20.

*But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become
the first-fruits of them that slept.*

WHEN we seriously consider how much the Son of God suffered for our sins, we cannot but be highly concerned and troubled at the remembrance of those sins for which so great a person suffered; for certainly it was the greatest demonstration that ever was, or could be given, of the divine displeasure and vengeance against the sins of mankind, that no less a person than the Son of God himself was able to expiate them, nor he by any less means than his own blood. The consideration whereof should not only deter us from the commission of sin hereafter, but it should make us loath and abhor ourselves for those which we have committed heretofore; what grief, what horror, should seize upon our spirits every time that we consider how the eternal Son of God, the only-begotten of his Father, was affronted, was abused, was spit upon, was arraigned, was condemned, was crucified, was put to death, to the painful, to the shameful, to the cursed death upon the cross, and all for those very sins which we, ungrateful wretches that we are, have lived and delighted in! Methinks the remembrance of it should make us blush and be ashamed of ourselves, and never think that we can grieve enough for those

sins, for which Christ himself not only grieved, but died.

But lest this consideration, duly weighed, should lie so heavy upon our spirits, as by degrees to sink them down into despair ; we must consider withal, that as the remembrance of Christ's suffering for our sins affords us great matter for grief and sorrow, so the remembrance of his resurrection supplies us with as much cause of joy and comfort. We had great reason the other day to lament and bewail those sins which brought our blessed Lord with sorrow to his grave ; and we have as great reason this day to rejoice and triumph that he was raised again from it ; which was so great, so exceeding great a blessing to mankind, that it ought to be our constant employment while we are upon earth, as it will be when we come to heaven, to praise and magnify the eternal God for it ; at least upon every Lord's day, which was therefore set apart for our Lord's service, because he rose upon it. But above all other the Lord's days, that which succeeded the Jewish passover, wherein our Lord suffered, hath been all along devoted by the church to the memory of his resurrection, which happened upon it, and to our rejoicing and praising Almighty God for so great a mercy as that was.

This therefore being the proper work of the day, that I may prepare you the better for it, and assist you, as well as I can, in the due performance of it, I shall endeavour to shew what you ought to believe concerning the resurrection of Christ, and what cause you have to rejoice and to give thanks to God this day, that you can say with the holy apostle, *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept.*

In which words we may observe,

I. That Christ did truly rise again.

II. That he thereby became *the first-fruits of them that slept.*

In speaking to the first, we shall consider,

1 In what sense Christ is said to have risen from the dead ?

2. What ground we have to believe that he did so ?

3. What benefit we have received by it, for which we ought to rejoice and give thanks unto God this day ?

As for the first, in what sense Christ is said to have risen from the dead ? that we shall easily understand, if we do but consider how that Christ so took our human nature upon him, that he became really and truly a man, of the same nature and substance with other men in all things except sin. Consisting as other men do of a rational soul, and a terrestrial body, and both so united together, as that his body was quickened, informed, and actuated by his soul ; by which means he performed all vital actions, and therefore was properly said to live, as we do, and that for several years together, until at length his body, by the excessive pain and torture that he suffered upon the cross, being made incapable of all vital motion, and so unfit for the soul to inhabit any longer, the knot was untied, and his soul was separated from his body, and so continued for some time ; during which time, although both the essential parts of man, his soul and body, subsisted, or were in being, as well as they were before, yet not subsisting conjunctly, but separately, he was properly dead, as other men are, when their souls have left their bodies ; and in this state he continued from Friday till Sunday morning ; when his body being made a fit receptacle for the soul again, the same soul was again united to it, and so the same man that before was dead, now lived again, and is therefore said to be *raised from the dead*, or out of that state of death wherein he had continued all that time, yea, he so lived again, as never to die more ; but though it be above seventeen hundred years since he rose again, he is still alive, and so will be for evermore.

The next question is, what grounds we have to believe that Christ thus rose from the dead ? In general, we have as much ground to believe that Christ rose

from the dead, as we have to believe that we ourselves are now alive ; or, if you will, as much as it is possible for a thing of that nature to be capable of ; for besides that, it was plainly foreshewn in the types, and infallibly foretold by the prophets under the law, and so could not but come to pass ; we have the testimony of two angels for it, who were both eye-witnesses of the fact itself ; for they saw him not only risen, but rising, and assisted him in it, by rolling away the stone which was at the mouth of the sepulchre where he lay, and told the disciples that came to the place to see him, that *he was not there, but was risen*, Luke xxiv. 4, 5, 6. Matt. xxviii. 6. And after he was risen, his disciples frequently saw him, conversed familiarly with him, yea, eat and drank with him as really as they had done it before his passion ; and that it was the same person they knew by his visage, by the lineaments of his body, by his voice, and by the print of the spear in his side, and of the nails in his hands and feet wherewith he had been fastened to the cross ; which was so clear a demonstration that it was the same body that was before crucified, that when one of his disciples doubted of it, whether it was he or no, he said to him, *Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands ; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side ;* which that disciple had no sooner done, but he was fully convinced that it was the same person that had those wounds given him upon the cross, John xx. 27, 28. and so his doubting proved the occasion of our being more confirmed in the truth of it.

And indeed it is much to be observed, that both St. Thomas himself and the rest of the apostles were so fully assured that their master Jesus was risen from the dead, that all the troubles and persecutions that they afterwards underwent for his sake, could never make them so much as doubt of it, much less deny it ; but they all attested it to the last, and sealed it with their own blood ; which certainly they would never have

done, had they not been as sure that they had seen him alive after he had been dead, as that they had seen him so before he died. And questionless, there never was any matter of fact since the world began so fully proved by the concurrent testimonies of so many persons, not only hazarding, but actually laying down their lives in the defence of it, as this was.

Neither must we think that this fundamental article of our Christian religion is grounded only upon the testimony of men and angels; for Christ himself hath given us so full, so clear a demonstration of it, that though no creature in the world had ever seen him after his resurrection, yet none could deny but that he did rise again, in that he did so exactly fulfil what he had promised before; for he told his disciples a little before his passion, that when he was gone from them, he would send another Comforter, even the Holy Ghost, unto them, John xvi. 7 which you know he accordingly did upon the day of Pentecost, the Holy Ghost descending in a miraculous manner upon his disciples, and enabling them to speak all manner of languages, Acts ii. 1, 2, 3. But how was it possible for Christ to have done this, except he rose from the dead? Can a man that lies in the grave, and is not able to lift up himself from the earth, can such a one get up to heaven, and from thence send down the Spirit of God? It is impossible; for a dead man can do nothing, much less so great a thing as that was; and therefore his doing of it is an undeniable argument that he is indeed risen from the dead.

To which we may also add that infallible testimony that Almighty God himself hath hereby given to this truth, in that he bore witness to them that preached it, *both with signs, and wonders, and with divers miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will*, as the apostle speaks, Heb. ii. 4. For would he, who is truth itself, bear witness to a lie? Would he have given such extraordinary power, and courage, and success to the apostles in publishing this unto the world,

if it had not been a great truth? No certainly; every sermon that the apostles preached, every miracle that they wrought, every suffering they underwent, every danger they were in for Christ's sake, was a more than mathematical, a divine demonstration, that he is risen from the dead; especially considering, that how incredible soever it might seem at first, yet by the almighty power of God accompanying the publication of it, the whole world was soon convinced of the truth and certainty of this proposition, that Christ is risen from the dead; and therefore I need not insist any longer upon shewing what grounds you have to believe it, seeing God himself hath proved it so effectually to you, that I dare say you are all by his grace fully persuaded of it.

The other and principal thing to be considered in this subject, especially upon this day, is, what are those great benefits we have received by Christ's resurrection, for which we ought to rejoice and give thanks to God at each commemoration of it? In general they are so many and so great, that did we but fully understand them, and were we but truly sensible of them, nothing would come near our hearts this day but joy and thankfulness to God for so unspeakable a mercy as, this was. It is past my skill either to describe or number them all to you; and therefore I shall not undertake that, but only endeavour to present you with some such considerations about it, whereby your hearts may be duly affected and raised up to a more than ordinary pitch of joy and praise to God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ this day. For,

1. Hereby he was declared to be the Messiah, and the Son of God; as the apostle expressly asserts, where, speaking of our Saviour, he saith, *that he was declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 4. that is, God, by raising Jesus from the dead by his almighty power, did thereby fully declare and demonstrate to the world, that this Jesus, whom he thus raised,

was his Son ; not a mere man only, but the only-begotten of the Father ; so that by raising him from the dead, he confirms what he had said of him when he was baptized, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17 And therefore what the Psalmist speaks of Christ in general, saying, *I will declare the decree : the Lord hath said unto me, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Psal. ii. 7 the apostle applies to the resurrection of Christ, Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 5. because by that means God did declare to the world, that this Christ was his only-begotten Son ; otherwise he would never have raised him from the dead, and so have confirmed all that he had ever said or done : so that the question which the high-priest propounded to our Saviour, saying, *I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be Christ, the Son of God*, Matt. xxvi. 63. was now effectually answered by his being raised from the dead, and so declared to be so by God himself.

Now what a mighty consolation is this unto us all, that our Saviour is, by his resurrection, declared to be no less a person than the Son of God ? One so far above all creatures, that he hath absolute authority over them. One, who being raised from the dead, is *set at the right hand of God in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but in that which is to come*, Eph. i. 20, 21. One so highly exalted by God, that he hath a name given him *which is above every name ; that at the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth ; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11 One whom the angels themselves are commanded to worship ; and to acknowledge to be their Lord, Heb. i. 6. And it is very observable, that so they did immediately upon his resurrection ; *He is not here*, saith the angel, *he is*

risen ; come, see the place where the Lord lay, Matt. xxviii. 6. He is their Lord, it seems, as well as ours ; all power being given to him both in heaven and earth, as himself said after his resurrection, ver. 18. now what can, if this doth not, transport our hearts into holy ecstasies of joy and thankfulness to God, who hath provided so great, so mighty, so almighty a Saviour for us ? what cause have we all to sing with the blessed Virgin this day, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour. In God my Saviour ; what a comfort is this, that God himself should be our Saviour, or, which is all one, our Saviour God ; yet this is plainly declared to us, by his resurrection from the dead.

2. By Christ's resurrection from the dead, his Gospel was established, and our faith confirmed in him. The apostle, a little before my text, ver. 17 saith, *If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ;* for all our expectations from him had been frustrated, all our hopes and confidence in him would have been groundless, because all his promises would have been void and of none effect, except he had risen from the dead ; for he would not have been in a capacity to have fulfilled them to us ; whereas by his resurrection from the dead, all the promises which he, or God in him, hath made to mankind, are so far confirmed to us, that there is no place left for doubting or unbelief ; for indeed they were all comprehended and so fulfilled in this one, even in God's raising Christ from the dead, according to his promise : and how great joy and comfort this affords us, the apostle intimates, saying, *We declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again, Acts xiii. 32, 33.*

Glad tidings indeed ! that as there are no good things but what God hath promised to us in Christ, so there are none of his promises but what he hath fulfilled

and confirmed to us, by raising him from the dead. So that now we have no cause at all to doubt of any thing that is either said or promised in the Gospel, for God himself hath fully approved and established, and set his own almighty hand and seal to it. And therefore we may boldly say, that nothing was ever affirmed by Christ but what was true ; nothing foretold but what hath or shall be fulfilled ; nothing commanded but what is just and good ; nothing threatened but what shall be executed upon impenitent and unbelieving sinners ; nothing promised but what shall certainly be performed to all that repent and believe the Gospel. Away therefore with all doubts and diffidence about any thing that is there revealed ; *heaven and earth may pass away, but Christ's word shall never pass away*, Matt. xxiv. 35. Hath he said, *I and my Father are one* ? John x. 30. then, whether we understand it or no, we may be confident of the truth of it. Hath he foretold that he will one day come in glory, and all the holy angels with him, *and that he will then sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations* ? Matt. xxv. 31, 32. then may you be as certain that you shall one day see him upon his throne, as you are that ye are now in this place. Hath he commanded you to deny yourselves, to take up your cross, and to follow him ? Matt. xvi. 24. then you may be sure it is good, and just, and necessary for you to do so. Hath he threatened destruction to all that live and die in their sins without repentance, saying, *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish* ? Luke xiii. 3. then there is no avoiding it ; you must either repent, or be damned. And hath he promised rest to all *that labour and are heavy laden*, if they come to him ? then there is no question can be made of it, but that he will most certainly do it ; for we have not only his own word for it, but God the Father hath confirmed it to us by raising him from the dead ; which, as it strengthens our faith, it must needs be matter of extraordinary joy and comfort to us ; yea, all the joy and comfort that ever we expect from

Christ, is grounded upon this one article of our faith, that he is risen from the dead.

3. By the resurrection of Christ, we are fully assured that he hath made complete satisfaction for our sins, so that upon our repentance of them they will all for his sake be certainly pardoned and forgiven us. This necessarily follows upon the former, and therefore the apostle joins them together in the place before quoted, saying, *If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins*; implying, that if Christ had not risen, our believing in him would have been to no purpose, and, by consequence, we should still lie under the guilt of our sins, obnoxious to eternal damnation for them; whereas, on the other side, Christ being indeed risen from the dead, as we have all the reason in the world to believe in him, so by our believing in him *we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins*, Col. i. 14.

And the reason in short is this, we, by our affronting the majesty, dishonouring the name, and transgressing the commands of our great Creator, have incurred his displeasure, and rendered ourselves obnoxious to all the punishments, even to that death itself which his law and justice have threatened against such ungrateful and rebellious creatures. But the debt which we have hereby contracted being so great, that it is impossible for us ever to pay it, the Son of God himself was pleased to undertake it for us, to become our surety, and to satisfy God's justice for our sins, by undergoing those punishments in our nature, which we must otherwise have undergone in our persons for evermore. Hence he having taken our nature upon him, suffered the extremity of the law, even death itself, in our steads, and for our sakes, in whose nature he suffered it; by which means *he was a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 1, 2. Now Christ having thus suffered death for us, and so paid that debt which was due from us to God, God was pleased the third day after to raise him up to life

again, and so to open as it were the prison doors, and acknowledge himself fully satisfied for the sins of mankind, by having that death which he had threatened to us undergone in our nature, united to the person of his own Son; by virtue of which hypostatical union, that death was more, and of greater value, than the eternal death of all mankind could be. And God having thus discharged our surety by raising him from the dead, all our obligations to punishments are now cancelled and made void, so soon as ever we perform those easy conditions which the Gospel requires of us, in order to the applying the sufferings of our human nature in Christ, to our own particular persons; so that by the resurrection of Christ we are fully assured that the work of our redemption was finished, and that if it be not our own faults, our sins may be all pardoned, and our persons justified before God upon his account; who, as the apostle saith, *was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification*, Rom. iv. 25. that is, who died for our sins, and rose again, that, by virtue of that death, he might justify our persons before God.

Consider this, all ye that are sensible of your sins, and then tell me, whether you have not cause to rejoice and bless God this day for the resurrection of your Saviour? If Christ had not risen again, what a sad, what a dismal condition had you all been in; like the fiends of hell, reserved *in chains under darkness, to the judgment of the great day*: whereas now that Christ is dead and risen again, whatsoever sins you have committed, it is but repenting of them, and they shall all be pardoned; howsoever you have incensed the wrath of God against you, it is but believing and obeying the Gospel for the future, and he will be reconciled to you; for Christ *was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*; we have sinned, but he hath suffered for our sins; we have deserved death, but he hath undergone it for us. Neither did he only die for us, but is risen again to confirm and apply the

merits of his death to us ; *who then shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again,* Rom. viii. 33, 34. Let us therefore lay aside all melancholy and desponding thoughts this day, and put our whole trust and confidence on him that died and rose again for us. And to testify our acknowledgment of so great mercy, let us spend this day in praising, in adoring, in magnifying the eternal God our Saviour, who is risen from the dead, and *become the first-fruits of them that slept.*

4. Christ being raised from the state of death, he is now able to raise us from a state of sin, and to quicken us with his own Spirit ; so that our sanctification as well as our justification depended upon his resurrection : had he continued in his grave, all mankind had continued in their trespasses and sins ; but when he our Head arose, we his members could not but rise with him, as the apostle assures us we did, saying, *If ye then be risen with Christ,* Col. iii. 1 and elsewhere, *buried with him in baptism, wherein also you are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead,* Col. ii. 12. *When therefore we were dead in trespasses and sins, God quickened us together with Christ,* Eph. ii. 5. *that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life,* Rom. vi. 4. And as we thus rose in Christ our Head, so he being risen, continually diffuses his Holy Spirit into all his members, whereby we are actuated, and so enabled to repent and obey his Gospel ; for he being raised from the dead, *God hath exalted him with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and remission of sins,* Acts v 31. From whence it appears, that Christ being upon his resurrection advanced to heaven, doth from thence distribute not only his pardons for those sins which we repent of, but likewise grace to repent of our sins, that

so they may be pardoned ; and, by consequence, all the graces of his Holy Spirit here comprehended under that of repentance ; so that whatsoever is necessary to be performed by us in order to our pardon and salvation, Christ being raised from the dead, can now enable us to perform it, or, as the apostle words it, *we can do all things through Christ which strengthens us*, Phil. iv. 13.

Now how great a comfort is this to all such amongst you as are weary of their sins, and desire to be eased of them, I need not tell you ; you yourselves cannot but find it by your own experience, what a mighty refreshment it is in all your spiritual conflicts to consider, that your Saviour being risen from the dead, is always ready to assist you, and to supply you with such measures of his grace whereby you may be enabled, either totally to subdue your lusts, or effectually to withstand all temptations to them ; for mine own part, I verily think there is no joy, no pleasure in this world, comparable to that which ariseth from a firm faith, and right apprehensions of Christ's being always not only interceding for us in heaven, but also present with us upon earth, to direct, support, and carry us through the various changes and chances of this mortal life, till he hath brought us to himself in glory ; that he is always more ready to help, than the devil can be to tempt us, that his grace is always sufficient for us ; when we are in such straits and perplexities that we know not what to do, he presently conveys such light into our minds, whereby we plainly see the way we ought to walk in ; when our souls are dejected, distressed, tormented with the remembrance of our former sins, he saith to us, as he did to the man in the Gospel, Be of good cheer, my son, thy sins are all pardoned ; when we meet with crosses and troubles in the world, which are apt to distract our thoughts, and to make our passions turbulent and unruly, he by his Holy Spirit reduceth them into order, and gives us strength not only to bear, but to

improve whatsoever happens to his glory and our good; when we are touched with so quick a sense of our present infirmities, and the relics of sin and corruption still remaining in us, that it cuts us to the heart, and makes every thing uneasy and uncomfortable to us, he binds up our wounds, he healeth our troubled breasts, and gives rest to our souls, by assuring us that he himself will stand by us, and enable us not only to resist, but overcome all these our spiritual enemies; so that when we cry out in the words of the apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* we may add with him, *I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord*, Rom. vii. 24, 25. he that thinks not this to be a matter of real joy, knows not as yet what it is to be a Christian.

5. By the resurrection of Christ, we are fully assured that he will be our Judge at the last day; as the apostle long ago observed, saying, that *now God commands all men every where to repent; because he hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained; whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*, Acts xvii. 30, 31. It is true, his commission to judge the world was granted to him before his passion; *for the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son*, as he himself tells us, John v. 22. Matt. xxviii. 18. But it was sealed and published at his resurrection from the dead, whereby God publicly owned, declared, and confirmed him to be as the Saviour, so also the Judge of mankind: this being one great end of his being raised again, *that we may all appear before his judgment-seat, and there receive according to what we have done in the flesh, whether it be good or evil*, 2 Cor. v. 10.

And this certainly is no small comfort to them who believe in Christ, that they shall give up their accounts at the last day to him in whom they believe; that he who is now their Advocate, shall be then our Judge; for

then we may be confident that we shall have all the favour shewed us that either the Law or Gospel can allow of: neither can we doubt, but that all the promises which he made us when he was upon earth, will be exactly fulfilled by him when he sits upon his throne. Hath he promised that those *that come to him he will in no wise cast out*? John vi. 37 then we need not fear being rejected by him to eternity, if we do but come unto him in time. Hath he promised that they who believe in him *shall never perish, but have everlasting life*? chap. iii. 16. then be sure he will make it good at that day; so that no one person that ever did, or ever shall believe aright in him, but shall then be saved by him from ruin and destruction. Hath he promised that he will place all his faithful disciples, all real saints, as sheep at his right hand, and say to them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*? Matt. xxv 34. *Hath he said it, and will he not perform it*? yes, doubtless, they that are truly such, will as certainly hear that blessed sentence pronounced upon themselves at the last day, as ever it was pronounced by him before. In short, hath he promised to prepare a place for us, and to receive us to himself, *that where he is, there we may be also*? John xiv. 2, 3. then we need not, we cannot question but that the place will be ready for us, and that we shall live with him for ever. The consideration whereof cannot surely but make our hearts even leap with joy, and fill our mouths with nothing but praise and thankfulness this day to Almighty God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, the great foundation of all these our hopes and expectations from him. Especially considering, that not only our souls, but our bodies too, and so our whole man, will be at that day advanced to the highest glory they are capable of; for as Christ is risen from the dead, *so he is become the first-fruits of them that slept*: which is the other thing to be considered in the words, even that,

II. *Christ being risen from the dead, thereby became the first-fruits of them that slept.* For the understanding whereof, we must know, that the apostle is here proving that our bodies shall rise again at the last day, and he proves it from this argument, because Christ rose again : *Now, saith he, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ?* ver 12. and then having prosecuted the argument by shewing how many absurdities would follow upon the denial of Christ's resurrection, he concludes it with these words, *but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept ;* that is, Christ's resurrection is a plain and undeniable argument, that we also who sleep or die, shall rise again ; for, as the same apostle elsewhere observes, *if the first-fruit be holy, the whole lump also is holy*, Rom. xi. 16. so here *Christ is the first-fruits of them that slept*, so that he rising again, all others must needs rise too. In the same sense he is elsewhere called, *the beginning, and the first-begotten from the dead*, Col. i. 18. Rev. i. 5. not but that there were several raised from the dead before, as some in the Old Testament, and some by him in the New, as Lazarus, and the widow's son at Naim ; but these rose so as to die again, whereas Christ was raised to an immortal life, so as never to die more ; and he was the first that ever did so ; and whosoever do so, as all shall at the last day, they do it by virtue of his resurrection.

For, as the apostle argues in the following words, *since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead : for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.* All mankind being contained in Adam, when he fell, all fell in him ; and so the whole human nature being contained in Christ, when he rose, all rose with him, at least virtually and potentially : so that by virtue and power of his rising from the dead in our nature, all that partake of that nature in which he did it, shall rise again too, and therefore he is called the

second Adam; one by whom all mankind shall be raised from that death to which they were made subject by the first. The first Adam died, and therefore we must die too. The second Adam rose again, and therefore we shall rise again too. So that Christ's resurrection is not only a proof, but the cause of ours; and we shall as certainly rise again, as Christ ever did so, and because he did so. In which respect, Christ's resurrection affords us as great matter of joy and comfort, as any we have hitherto mentioned; as appears from the matter, the manner, and the end of our resurrection, which I shall briefly explain unto you.

1. As for the matter, it is plain that the same bodies that die, shall rise again. As our Saviour's body was the same after his resurrection, that it was before and at his passion, of the same stature, the same proportion, the same features, the same substance every way, so it will be with us. The same bodies out of which our souls depart when we die, shall be raised to life again at the resurrection; for otherwise, if there should be any change of the substance, it could not be properly called a resurrection; our bodies cannot be said to rise again, unless they be the same they were before, at least as to the substance; it must be the same flesh, the same bones, the same nerves and sinews, the same veins and arteries, the same head, the same heart, the same hands and feet, and so as the other parts of the body, the substance will be the same.

This is that wherewith Job comforted himself in the midst of all his troubles, saying, *I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another*, Job xix. 25, 26, 27. But this he could never have expected, unless he had been sure that that very flesh and eye which he then had should be raised again at the latter day, and not another.

But here we must observe, that though the substance of our bodies will be the same as they are now, or as they will be when we die, yet the disposition and qualities of that substance will be much altered ; for, as the apostle saith, *it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body,* 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43, 44. It is still the same body, but it is now endowed with incorruptible, with glorious, with powerful, and with spiritual qualities. And so, though it be still the same body, yet that body shall be so disposed and ordered, that it shall far exceed that wherein our souls are at present immured ; so far, that our bodies shall be then made like to the body of Christ himself ; for, as the apostle assures us, *he shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself,* Phil. iii. 21.

Now who is able to express the comfort that a soul which is truly pious must needs receive from a firm belief and serious consideration of this, that that very body which he now hath, shall not only be raised again, but it shall be made much better than it was before, fashioned like to Christ's body, that is, as pure, as glorious, as spiritual, as it is possible for a body to be. We cannot but all find, by sad and woful experience, that the bodies we now carry about with us, are a great clog and hindrance to us in the performance of all religious duties, and so both in the pursuit and enjoyment of real happiness ; and that too, not only when they are in pain or sick, but likewise when we have all outward ease and health that we can desire ; for our souls being so closely united to our bodies, that so long as they are in them, they cannot act without them, but in all their operations are forced to make use of the animal spirits in our bodies, which are generally either too gross and heavy, or else irregular and disorderly : hence it comes to pass

that we are commonly very dull and heavy in all religious exercises, or else our imaginations are so disturbed, our passions so unruly, and all our thoughts so desultory and inconstant, that we find it very difficult to fix our minds so as to serve the Lord without distraction; every little humour that ariseth in the body being apt to discompose the animal spirits, so as to make them unfit for the service of the soul.

And besides that, our bodies, by reason of the several humours which are apt by turns to be predominant in them, do not only impede and hinder us in doing what is good, but excite and stir us up to what is evil and wicked; from hence it is that some are passionate and fretful, others melancholy and dejected. Some are inclined to lust and uncleanness, others to drunkenness and intemperance; which last is, in divers respects, both the effect and the cause of such ill humours arising in the body; be sure these and many such like sins, though they would not be sins without the soul, yet they would not be committed without the body; which therefore is the occasion of a great part of those vices which men are so generally addicted to.

But it will not be so when our bodies are risen again; for then they will be so nimble and active, so pure and spiritual, so free from all petulant and domineering humours, that they will be perfectly subject to the soul, and obedient to the dictates of reason and religion; as ready upon all occasions to serve the soul as the soul shall be to serve God. As the whole shall never be sick or out of tune, so neither will any part of them: our brains will never be clouded, but always serene and clear; our imaginations will never be disturbed, but shall always represent things to our minds just as they are in themselves; our passions will never be headstrong and exorbitant, but always shall move regularly towards their proper objects; our bodies shall there be supported by the almighty power of God, without the use of meat and drink; and therefore our stomachs shall never be

clogged, nor our heads annoyed with their fumes. As we shall be always doing good, we shall never be weary of doing it; for whatsoever we do, our bodies shall never be discomposed nor out of tune, but we shall always be quick and lively, cheerful and pleasant, fresh as the morning; continually beholding, praising, and adoring him who rose from the dead, *and became the first-fruits of them that slept*: how comfortable the consideration of this is to all that truly love and fear God, they themselves experience far better than I am able to express.

And it is no small addition to their comfort, to consider also the manner how they shall rise again; even with greater joy and triumph, with greater pomp and solemnity, than any one as yet is able to imagine; for as the holy angels attended our blessed Saviour at his first coming into the world, so they will do it at his second also; for our Lord himself tells us, that when the Son of man shall come again, all the holy angels shall come with him, *Matt. xxv. 31 and that he will send them, his angels, with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other, Matt. xxiv. 31* At the sound therefore of a trumpet blown by the holy angels, so as that it may be heard all the world over, the dust of every body that ever was informed by a rational soul, shall immediately gather up itself again, and haste into the place where it was before, so as to compose the same individual body; and their bodies being thus refitted, the souls of all the elect shall come down from heaven, and be united again to them, so that the same persons that died in the faith of Christ, shall now be raised through his power to a life immortal, by the ministry of no less nor fewer persons than all the holy angels.

What a joyful day then must this needs be to all those that love Christ's appearing? It is true it will be a very sad and terrible day indeed to all those that lived

and died in their sins : but I speak not now of these, but of such only as live and die sincere members of Christ's body, real and true saints ; how pleasant will the trumpet sound, how welcome will this day be to such as these ? how will their souls rejoice to meet their old mates their bodies again ? what a sweet intercourse and greeting will there be between them ? when these bodies, which they had mortified and kept under by fasting, and watching, and praying upon earth, shall now be reassumed by them, to partake with them of glory and immortality in heaven ? and that, for the effecting of this great mystery, God should make use of no less glorious instruments than the holy angels, which continually attend him ? This is that which the holy apostle looked upon as matter of extraordinary comfort to all that truly believe in Christ, and obey his Gospel ; *For the Lord himself, saith he, shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and the dead in Christ shall rise first : then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air ; and so shall we be ever with the Lord : wherefore comfort one another with these words,* 1 Thess. iv. 16, 17, 18.

But that which is the greatest comfort of all is still behind, and that is the end of our resurrection ; even that they who believe in Christ upon earth, may live with him in heaven, as the apostle assureth us in those words. I know the souls of all that die in the Lord will be with him before, but not their bodies ; and, by consequence, not the whole man : but now both soul and body, and so their whole persons, will be advanced to the highest glory, honour, and happiness, that creatures are capable of ; for there the eye, both of our body and mind, shall be so enlightened, that we shall be able to see perfectly, and contemplate the whole creation, and that infinite wisdom, power, and goodness, which appears in both, in the contrivance and government of the

world: there we shall familiarly converse with the holy angels and glorified saints, which will be our constant companions and fellow-citizens of the new Jerusalem: there we shall behold and enjoy the top of the creation, Christ himself in our own nature united to the divine person, and so exalted above all creatures: yea, there we shall perfectly behold our Creator himself, whose glory, beauty, excellency, and perfections, shall be so clearly unveiled and discovered to us, that our whole souls should be transported into flames of love unto him, and continually ravished with ecstasies of joy and pleasure in him.

But what do I mean to speak of these glories which the eye hath not seen, nor the ear heard, and which the heart of man is not able to conceive? Alas! we poor mortals upon earth little think what it is to be in heaven, and therefore it is in vain for us to offer at the description of it; only this we may say in general, that whatsoever can any way conduce to the making either of our souls or bodies happy, shall there be fully, perfectly, eternally enjoyed by all and every one that dies in the true faith and fear of God, after they are risen from the dead.

Having thus considered how many and great advantages accrue to us by the resurrection of Jesus Christ; that he was thereby declared to be the Messiah, and Son of God; that his Gospel was thereby established, and our faith confirmed in it; that we are thereby assured that he hath finished our redemption, and made complete satisfaction for all our sins; that he is able to mortify our lusts, and make us holy, and that he is thereby become the *first-fruits of them that slept*; so that by the means and virtue of his resurrection we also shall rise again to a life immortal: hence as we cannot but acknowledge we have cause to do so, so it must needs be our duty to rejoice this day, and to praise and magnify the eternal God for so unspeakable a mercy as this was; for, as the Psalmist saith, *this is*

the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day that the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad therein, Psal. cxviii. 23, 24.

Let us therefore, as the apostle saith, *keep the feast, not with the old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth, 1 Cor. v. 8.* Let us keep it, *not with rioting and drunkenness, not with chambering and wantonness, not with strife and envying,* but with rejoicing and praising God for raising our Saviour from the grave, to turn us from these and all other vices whatsoever.

Neither must we content ourselves with remembering Christ's resurrection to day ; but, as St. Paul gave it in charge to Timothy, saying, *Remember that Jesus Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my Gospel, 2 Tim. ii. 8.* so say I to you, remember always that Christ is risen from the dead, that he is gone to heaven, that he is now there at the right hand of God, making intercession for you ; and *if ye be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affections on things above, and not on things in the earth, Col. iii. 1, 2.* For where should your heart be, but where your treasure is ? Where should your affections be, but where your Lord and Saviour is, the best friend, the greatest treasure that you have in the whole world ? Let us therefore now bid adieu to all things here below, and go up to live with Christ in heaven ; that our hearts may be there now, where we hope both our souls and bodies shall be for ever, in and through him who is risen from the dead, and become *the first-fruits of them that slept.*

S E R M O N LXXI.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION A PROOF OF HIS DIVINITY.

ROM. i. 4.

And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead.

ALTHOUGH our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ subsisted from all eternity in the form of God, and was himself God blessed for ever, yet, when he had taken upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, he humbled himself to the lowest degree among them ; though all the world was his, as God, yet as man he had not where to lay his head. Though all mankind lived continually upon his bounty, he for some time lived upon the bounty of certain women, who ministered to him of their substance, Luke viii. 3. Though he was honoured and adored by all the angels in heaven, yet upon earth he was rejected and despised of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. Thus he lived, while he was here below, in the lowest and meanest condition that he well could ; and he, doubtless, chose to do so for great and wise ends. To us the difference between the several ranks of men among us seems great and considerable, but it seemed not so to him ; to him they were all alike ; the greatest monarch upon the earth was as much below him as the poorest beggar ; and therefore in itself it was all one to him, what outward state and condition of life he should

lead, while he conversed upon earth ; but he was pleased to choose that which we call the lowest, not only to teach us by his example, as he did by his precepts, to condemn this world, but especially, that by that means he might the better attain the great end of his coming into it, even to offer up himself as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind. If he had appeared here in pomp and grandeur, like a mighty prince and conqueror, as the Jews expected the Messias to be, he would have been so much above them, that they neither durst nor could have touched his life ; but he seeming to be in a much lower degree than most of themselves were, they had him, as it were, at their foot, and could trample upon him as they pleased ; and accordingly they slighted, reviled, and reproached him all the while he was among them, and at last arraigned, condemned, and hanged him on a cross, as if he had been some great malefactor, little thinking all the while that they crucified the Lord of glory, and did that to him which he came into the world to suffer for the sins of it.

But as all the while he lived among them, notwithstanding the meanness of his outward appearance, he demonstrated himself, by the works he did, to be almighty ; so he made his death too an occasion of demonstrating the same thing to them, by his rising again to life ; for as his death shewed him to be a real and true man, so his resurrection as plainly shewed him to be the one living and true God. This is that which the apostle here asserts, and I shall endeavour to prove from the words I have now read, compared with other places of the holy Scriptures.

The apostle, the better to recommend what he was about to write to the Romans, begins his Epistle to them with a catalogue of the titles which God had given him, and which he esteemed, as they were, the greatest that could be conferred upon him, saying, *Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the Gospel of God, which he had promised before*

by the prophets in the holy Scriptures ; and that they might better understand what this Gospel of God was, which he was now to preach to them, he tells them first in general that it was concerning his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord ; and then he gives them a particular description of his person, who or what this Jesus Christ was, which, saith he, *was made of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead* : where he describes our Saviour according to both his natures ; according to the flesh, that is, his human nature ; *and according to the spirit of holiness*, that is, his divine nature ; for so the word *spirit*, when it is used of our Saviour in opposition to the flesh, always signifies, as might easily be shewn ; see 1 Pet. iii. 18. 1 Tim. iii. 16. 1 Cor. xv. 4. Now the apostle here saith, that our Lord, according to the flesh, or human nature, was of the seed of David, of that royal family of which David was the head ; but, according to his spiritual or divine nature, he was the Son of God, and declared and manifested to be so with power, by the resurrection from the dead ; so that he here makes Christ's resurrection from the dead to be a most powerful, invincible argument and demonstration, that he was the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father, of the same nature and substance with him, the only almighty and eternal God. To the same purpose is that of the same apostle, where, speaking of Christ's resurrection, he quotes those words which God spoke of his Son by the Psalmist, *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*, Acts xiii. 33. that is, this day have I declared and manifested to the world that thou art my only-begotten Son. For in Scripture things are then said to be, when they appear to be so ; as David after Absalom's rebellion said, *Do not I know that I am this day king over Israel*, 2 Sam. xix. 22. He had been king over Israel many years before, but he was now publicly owned and declared to be so, and therefore speaks

as if he had been made but that day. So here Christ was the Son of God from all eternity, but by his resurrection from the dead he appeared to be so to men, and therefore is said to be then begotten, because he was then declared by God himself to be begotten of him, and so his essential and eternal Son.

And verily among the many, I may say, innumerable arguments, which are dispersed all over the Bible to confirm us in this great fundamental article of our faith, this is so plain and strong, that if there were no other, this of itself is sufficient to do it. For that there was something extraordinary in Christ's resurrection appears in that he was not only the first, but the only person that ever yet rose from the dead, so as never to die any more; there were some raised by his prophets in the Old Testament, and some by him in the New; but they were raised only to a mortal life, and therefore soon died again; whereas he rose from the dead, so as to conquer death itself, and was never after subject to it, and therefore is called *πρωτότοκος ἐκ τῶν νεκρῶν*, *the first born from the dead*, Col. i. 18. Apoc. i. 5. *he that hath been dead, and is made alive again, hath a new life given him, and therefore may be properly said to be born again*; in which sense Christ is properly said to be the first born from the dead, he being the first that ever rose again to an immortal life, and it is only by virtue of his resurrection that all others shall rise again at the last day, he being, as the apostle saith, *the first-fruits of them that slept*, 1 Cor. xv. 20.

But that which was most extraordinary in the resurrection of Christ was, that it was a plain declaration and demonstration of his eternal power and Godhead, as might be easily shewn from those words of St. Peter, where, speaking of Christ, he saith, *Whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that he should be holden of it*, Acts ii. 24. For if he had not been God himself, but one of his creatures, it would have been possible with God to have

held him in the state of death, for all things are possible with God: he can annihilate, or destroy, or keep any of his creatures in what state he pleaseth; and therefore, if Christ had been only a creature, it would have been possible for him, as well as others, to be holden of death, which God himself by his apostle absolutely denies, and thereby declared him not to be a mere creature, but his own eternal and only-begotten Son.

But that God declared him to be so, by raising him from the dead, appears most plainly in that he thereby declared himself fully satisfied and well pleased with what he had said and done while he lived upon earth: for if Christ had done any thing contrary to God's will, or said any thing that was not perfectly true, he would have been a sinner as other men are, and so obnoxious to that death which God threatened against all sinners, never to rise again, so as to die no more till the last day, when all sinners must be judged. And therefore his resurrection from the dead, so soon after he died, was as clear a testimony as could be given to the world, that God approved and confirmed all that he had either said or done; that his actions were all most perfectly good, and his whole doctrine most certainly true, every thing just as he said it was.

Now the great doctrine that Christ taught all along was, that he was the Son of God; and at his very trial too, when the high-priest asked him, *Art thou the Christ, the Son of the blessed?* Jesus said, *I am*, Mark xiv. 62. This the high-priest, and all the Jews that were present, judged to be blasphemy, and accordingly condemned him to be guilty of death for it, ver. 64. which they could never have done, if they had not understood him so as that, according to the common meaning of that phrase in those days, by calling himself the Son of God he made himself equal with God; as they said also upon another occasion he did, because he said that God was his Father, John v. 18. and, indeed, it was in this sense that he constantly affirmed

that God was his Father, that he himself was *the Son of God, the only-begotten of the Father*, and the like. And, lest he should be mistaken, he took all occasions to let the world know, that although he now appeared only as a man upon earth, yet that he was indeed the great God of heaven, equal to the Father, and one with him ; *What, saith he, if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ?* John vi. 62. *No man hath ascended up to heaven, but he that came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven,* chap. iii. 13. *My Father worketh hitherto, and I work,* chap. v. 17. *The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father,* ver. 22, 23. *For as the Father hath life in himself, so hath he given to the Son to have life in himself,* ver. 26. *He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,* chap. xiv. 9. *Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me,* ver. 11. *I and the Father are one,* chap. x. 30. Many such expressions came from him while he was upon earth, whereby he asserted his eternal Godhead and unity with the Father, and God the Father as plainly asserted the truth of what he said, by raising him from the dead ; and therefore by his resurrection from the dead, as it is said in my text, he was declared to be the Son of God.

The same thing appears also from the power by which he rose again ; when a mere man dies, his soul being separated from his body, he ceaseth to be the person he was ; he is no longer a man, nor can act any thing at all as such, much less can he reunite his soul to his body, so as to make himself alive again ; that is only in the power of God ; all acknowledge it is he alone that can give life : but this did Christ do ; he raised himself after he was dead and buried, he gave life to himself, or made himself alive again ; *Destroy this temple,* saith he, *and in three days I will raise it up,* John ii. 19. This, as the Evangelist there observes, he spake of the temple

of his body, that he would raise up that again; that he himself would do it. And so he himself saith also in another place, *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again: no man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself; I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again*, John x. 17, 18. Which could not possibly be any other than the power of God, and therefore he who had it in himself, as he saith he had, must needs be God: if he had been only a creature, howsoever he had been raised again, he could never have done it himself; for being dead, he was no longer himself, the person he was before; but being God as well as man, and both in one person, his manhood not constituting a person of itself, nor ever subsisting but in his divine person, though one part of his manhood was separated from the other, he was still the same person he was before, and whatsoever he then did, the same person did it; when he was raised from the dead he raised himself, and therefore is often said to have risen again in an active sense, to shew it was his own act; it was he that did it, but that he could never have done himself if he had not been a divine person, of another nature besides that in which he rose; for that nature be sure could never have raised itself, neither could any other have done it, but that which is divine; this being an act of divine power, of Omnipotence itself; wherefore seeing he himself rose, or raised himself from the dead, he thereby most evidently discovered himself to be the one Almighty God.

But he is sometimes said to be raised up by God; *whom God raised up*, saith St. Peter, Acts ii. 24. *but God raised him from the dead*, saith St. Paul, chap. xiii. 30. It is true; but this is so far from weakening, that it strengtheneth the argument, and makes it invincible; for seeing he is sometimes said to have raised himself, and at other times is said to be raised by God, it puts it beyond all dispute, that he himself is God,

otherwise the same act could never be imputed to God and to him, in the same sense as it is in this case ; and therefore his resurrection from the dead was as clear a demonstration of his divine power and nature, as could be given to the world.

It is indeed so clear and full, that Christ himself propounds it as a most infallible sign and evidence of his divine power and mission from heaven ; for when the Jews said to him, *What sign shewest thou unto us, seeing that thou doest these things ?* Jesus answered and said unto them, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*, John ii. 19, 20. And when at another time they said, *We would see a sign from thee ;* he answered and said unto them, *An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign ; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas : for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*, Matt. xii. 39, 40. In both which places he plainly propounds his resurrection from the dead the third day after he died, as a most sure and certain sign that he really was what he declared himself to be, Christ the eternal Son of God ; so that there was no need of any other sign to convince the world of it, this being of itself sufficient to shew it, to all that do not wilfully shut their eyes against it. To the same purpose is that where he saith, *When ye have lift up the Son of man, then ye shall know that I am*, John viii. 28. as if he had said, *When ye have put me to death, I will rise again, and by that ye shall know ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι, that I am ;* so it is in the original, *I am he that should come into the world ;* or, in general, as St. Augustine observed, *I am*, as God said to Moses when he desired to know his name, *I am that I am, and I am hath sent me unto you*, Exod. iii. 14. And as Christ himself saith again in this very chapter, *Before Abraham was, I am*, John viii. 58. So here, *Then ye shall know that I am in and of myself, Jehovah, the everlasting God, the Son of the Fa-*

ther. And therefore he adds, *and I do nothing of myself; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things: and he that sent me is with me; the Father hath not left me alone*, ver. 28, 29. That we might know, that although he himself also be Jehovah, yet he was begotten of the Father, received his divine essence from him, was sent into the world by him, and that the Father is always with him, or, as he expresseth it in another place, that the Father is in him, and he in the Father, John x. 38. xiv. 11 and, by consequence, that he is the Son of God, or God the Son, God of God, but still the one living and true God; and he was declared or confirmed to be so *with power*, as the apostle here saith, *by his resurrection from the dead*.

Seeing therefore that this great truth is confirmed to us in so wonderful a manner, let us take care to live with a constant and firm belief of it, suitable to the evidence we have for it. Of all the errors and heresies which the devil hath sown among us, beware of those which deny or strike at the divinity of our blessed Saviour, for they overthrow the foundation of our whole religion, and all our hopes of salvation in it; for none can save us but God; he himself saith, *Thou shalt know no God but me, for there is no Saviour besides me*, Hos. xiii. 4 And therefore, unless Christ be God, he could not be our Saviour; and none can believe in him as their Saviour, unless they believe him to be God; but they who do not believe in him, are sure to perish everlastingly: remember how he himself said, *If ye believe not that I am, ye shall die in your sins*, John viii. 24.

But, seeing we have such an almighty Saviour, let us never despair of salvation, but put our whole trust and confidence in him for all things necessary in order to it, in the use of the means which he, for that purpose, hath ordained in his church; never doubting but that he, who came into the world on purpose to save sinners, will save us as well as any other, if we do but apply ourselves to him by a quick and lively faith for it.

But, for that end, we must take heed that we never offend his divine Majesty, nor dishonour his great name, but make the best use that possibly we can of the grace he is pleased to afford us, to live answerably to our faith in him, and as becometh those who believe him to be the almighty God, who governs the world now, and will judge it at the last day.

This we are assured of by his resurrection ; and therefore let us praise and magnify his name for this undeniable evidence he hath given us of his almighty power to save us. There are many other most glorious effects of his resurrection from the dead, but the efficacy of them all depends upon this, and therefore we can never be sufficiently thankful for it, *that the stone which the builders refused is thus become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes. This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it*, Psal. cxviii. 22, 23, 24. *The Lord is my strength, and my song, and is now become my salvation*, ver. 14. *My soul doth magnify the Lord, my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour*. And that we may do it the more acceptably to God our Saviour, let us now go to his own table, and there offer up the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving to him for all his infinite love and goodness to mankind, and particularly for raising up that body from the dead, in which he died for us, and now liveth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, one God blessed for ever. Amen.

S E R M O N LXXII.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION A PROOF OF OURS.

1 COR. xv. 12.

Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ?

THAT Jesus Christ, after he was put to death upon the cross, was raised again to life, is not only one of the articles of our Christian faith, but that upon which all the rest are founded ; so that take away this, and the other would all fall to the ground, together with all our hopes of pardon and salvation ; for, as the apostle here observes, *if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and our faith is also vain*, ver 14. Not only in that all that we believe besides stands upon the same bottom with this, but likewise, because without this we could never attain the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls, that depending upon the intercession which Christ maketh for us in heaven ; which he could never have made, if he had not risen from the dead : especially that great article, the resurrection of the dead, depends so entirely upon Christ's resurrection, that a man cannot believe the one without the other ; and he who believes either, must needs believe both. At least, he that believes that Jesus Christ rose from the dead, cannot but believe that all mankind shall do so as well as he, he having the same ground for the one as he hath for the other

Hence, therefore, the apostle in this chapter, being directed by the Spirit of God to reveal what was necessary to be known and believed, concerning the resurrection of the dead in general, begins with the resurrection of Christ, and the grounds we have to believe that he rose from the dead; first, from the testimony of the holy Scriptures, foretelling that Christ should rise from the dead, ver. 3, 4. and then from the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen; assuring us that *he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve; after that of five hundred brethren at once; after that he was seen of James, then of the apostles again; and last of all of himself* too, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. from whence he takes occasion to shew how unworthy he was of so great a favour, and then he draws this conclusion from what he had thus premised concerning Christ's resurrection, that the dead shall certainly rise again; *Now, saith he, if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

From whence we may first observe, that there were some in those days that denied it; such were the sect of the Sadducees, who said *that there is no resurrection*, Matt. xxii. 23. Acts xxiii. 8. And such were Hymeneus and Philetus, of whom the same apostle saith, *that they have erred, saying, That the resurrection is past already; and overthrow the faith of some*, 2 Tim. ii. 18. Where we may observe by the way, that, by saying that the resurrection is past already, they overthrew the faith of such as hearkened to them; so that they could have no true faith at all, that being wholly grounded upon the same bottom with our hopes of the resurrection to come; and yet this damnable heresy, which hath been asleep almost ever since the apostles' days, is now received, to our shame be it spoken, in ours. There being a sort of people risen up among us, who, leaving the good word of God, and following their own corrupt humours and fancies, under the name of the light within them, have been led

themselves, and strive to lead others, into this, among other most horrid opinions that strike at the foundation of the Christian religion ; for though they profess to believe the resurrection of the dead, yet they understand it not of the body, but the soul, when that riseth from the death of sin to the life of righteousness, and so is in effect the same with regeneration ; which being effected in this life, in all that are regenerated, it is past already, and therefore not to be expected hereafter ; which plainly overthrows this great article of our faith, *the resurrection of the body*, and, by consequence, the faith of all that are so weak and careless of their own salvation, as to suffer themselves to be led blindfold into such pernicious and destructive heresies.

Against such kind of heretics the apostle here argues, wondering how any can deny the resurrection of the dead, now it is so plain and undeniable that Christ was raised from the dead. *Now if Christ, saith he, be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead ?* He looks upon this as such an invincible argument, that he cannot but admire how any are able to withstand it : and so shall we too, if we do but impartially consider these few things.

For, first, this answers all the reasons that can be alleged against the possibility of it, for which so many have denied that the dead shall rise again to life, even because it seemed, at least to them, altogether impossible, that the soul, which is once separated from the body, should be afterwards united to it again ; and that the parts of a body that are separated from one another, and reduced perhaps into thousands of atoms, and dispersed in as many various and far distant places, should notwithstanding come together again, every one into its own proper place, so as to make up the same body as they did before ; but that the soul, which is separated from its body, may be united to it again, cannot be now doubted of, seeing it was actually done in the resurrec-

tion of Christ; for it is a known principle, that what hath been done may be done; but the soul of Christ was reunited to his body, and therefore souls may be united again to their bodies, how long soever they have been separated from them. And if a separate soul or spirit may be united again to its body, much more may the parts of the same body, when separated, be again united together, they being all of the same nature, and having a natural tendency and inclination to the place from whence they came, and being all under the eye of God, when separated from one another, as much as when they were all joined together in the same body. But it is a certain rule, that he who can do the greater can do the less. And therefore seeing he raised Christ from the dead, no question can be made but that he can thus raise us too if he please.

And that he will be pleased to do it appears also from the resurrection of Christ; for as he died, so he rose again, not in a private, but public capacity; not as a single person only, but as the common head and representative of all mankind; so that we are said *to be risen with him*, Col. iii. 1 because our nature in general rose in him, all that partake of that nature must needs do so too, his resurrection being not only a most certain pledge and earnest, but the first-fruits of ours; as the apostle here saith, *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept*, ver 20. But, as the same apostle elsewhere saith, *if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy*, Rom. xi. 16. *and if he rose as the first-fruits, the whole lump or mass of mankind must also arise*. And therefore the apostle here adds, *for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead; for as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, ver 21, 22. that is, all mankind shall as certainly rise again to life in Christ, the second Adam, as they died in the first, and all by virtue of his resurrection from the dead; which therefore is not only the pattern and example, but the cause of

ours ; and such a cause that it cannot but take effect. But all men that die shall as certainly rise again as Christ did so, and because he did so.

Moreover, from the resurrection of Christ, we may infallibly conclude that we shall rise again, because he was thereby declared to be the Son of God, Rom. i. 4. For God having declared him to be his Son, by raising him from the dead, he thereby attested and confirmed all that Christ had said or taught ; but he, through the whole course of his ministry, taught mankind that they should rise again at the last day ; *The hour is coming, saith he, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation,* John v. 28, 29. And elsewhere he promiseth those that come unto him, *that he will raise them up at the last day,* chap. vi. 40, 44. *and that they shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just,* Luke xiv. 14. And when the Sadducees, which denied the resurrection, propounded a question to him about it, which they thought to be unanswerable, he did not only convince them of their ignorance and error, but demonstrated to them, out of the writings of Moses himself, that the dead shall rise again ; *Now, saith he, that the dead are raised, even Moses shewed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob ; for he is not the God of the dead, but of the living, for all live unto him,* Luke xx. 37, 38. Which argument was so plain and evident to them, that they had not a word to say against it. Seeing therefore Christ thus effectually taught and proved that the dead shall rise again, and seeing God, by raising him from the dead, declared that he was his Son, and, by consequence, that whatsoever he had taught was true ; therefore whosoever believeth that Christ was raised from the dead, must of necessity believe that all shall be so at the last day.

The same thing appears also from the end of his resurrection, for to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, *that he might be Lord both of the dead and living*, Rom. xiv. 9. *that he might exercise supreme authority and dominion over all*, as he will at the last day, when, as it there follows, *we shall stand before the judgment-seat of Christ*, ver. 10. which we are likewise fully assured of by his resurrection from the dead, as we learn from the same apostle, saying, *that God hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained, even Jesus Christ, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that he hath raised him from the dead*, Acts xvii. 31. From whence it is evident, that he was therefore raised again that he might judge both the dead and the living, and that we are thereby also assured by God himself that he will do it, but that he cannot do, unless the dead be raised again to life ; for so long as their bodies continue in the grave, or in a state of separation from their souls, they are not in being as men, and so not capable of appearing as such before him : and therefore unless the bodies of all men that ever died should be raised again, and their souls reunited to them, so as to be all made alive again as they were before, Christ would lose the end of his resurrection, as well as of all things else he did for mankind ; but there is no fear of that ; God doth nothing in vain, but always attains the end he aims at in what he doth. Seeing Christ rose again that he might be the Judge both of quick and dead, he will most certainly raise up the dead again, and summon them all together, with such as shall be then living, to appear before his judgment-seat, or rather he will raise them up, by his summoning them to come before him ; for he will summon them by the sound of a trumpet, blown by an archangel, so as to be heard all the world over, 1 Thess. iv. 16. And the trumpet shall no sooner sound, but the dead shall be raised, and they who are then living shall be changed,

1 Cor. xv. 52. *And then we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad,* 2 Cor. v. 10. And therefore the apostle might well say, as he doth in my text, to the Corinthians, *If Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection of the dead?*

I hope this cannot be said of any here present, for that you all believe and are fully persuaded, that the dead shall rise again ; but howsoever, to confirm your faith in this fundamental article of the Christian religion, waving all other arguments that might be produced for it, I have briefly shewn how necessarily it follows upon the resurrection of Christ, so that no man can believe that Christ rose from the dead the third day, but he must of necessity believe also that all men shall rise again at the last ; wherefore as ye believe the one, ye must never doubt of the other, but be fully persuaded in your minds, that as certainly as you shall ever die, you shall as certainly live again ; that although your souls shall be separated from your bodies, and continue so for some time, perhaps for many years, yet at last they shall return unto them, so that you shall then live again, as really as you are now alive.

And do not trouble your heads about the way and manner how this great work shall be effected ; as he did whom this apostle in this chapter speaks of, saying, *But some man will say, how are the dead raised up ? and with what body do they come ?* To whom he gives this sharp answer, *Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened except it die : and that which thou sowest, thou sowest not that body that shall be, but bare grain, it may chance of wheat, or some other grain ; but God giveth it a body as it hath pleased him, and to every seed his own body,* 1 Cor. xv. 35, 36, 37, 38. Where we may first observe, that the apostle calls him fool for asking such a silly question, *Thou fool,* saith he, inti-

inating that it is a great piece of folly and madness, for people to concern themselves about any thing but what is necessary for them to know and believe, concerning this or any other article of our Christian faith, but that we should rest contented with what is plainly revealed. And then we may also observe, that he acquaints us here with all that is necessary for us to know in this matter, under the similitude of a grain, or any seed sown in the ground, which first rots or dies there, and then riseth up again, not barely as it was sown, but with a stalk, an ear, or husk, or what else is proper for it, and God (for it is still his work) he gives to every seed its own body ; as if wheat be sown, there comes up wheat ; if barley, there comes up barley again ; so here, when our bodies are dead, and rotted in the earth or sea, or any where else, Almighty God, when he sees good, causeth them to rise up again, giving to every man his own body ; that body out of which his soul departed, shall be raised up again, and the same soul that departed from it, shall be restored and united again to it ; and so the same man that died, shall live again in the same body in which he died : as our Saviour's body which rose, was the same that he suffered in upon the cross, so that they who knew him before, knew him again after he was risen, which they could not have done if his body had not been of the same proportion, features, and lineaments which they had before observed in him ; and to put it beyond all dispute that it was the same, he shewed them the prints which the nails had made in his hands and feet, and which the spear had made in his side, which was the clearest evidence that could be given, that this was the very same body that had been nailed to the cross, and out of which his soul there departed ; and as his was, so every man's body when it is raised up shall be the same it was at the time when he died ; the same that dies shall rise again, and we shall be the same men or women then, that we are now ; and every one may say as Job did long ago, *I*

know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth ; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh (this very flesh of mine which I now have) shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes (these very eyes) shall behold, and not another, though my reins be consumed within me, Job xix. 25, 26, 27

But here we must farther observe, that the apostle, speaking of the resurrection of the just, saith, *It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption ; it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory ; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power ; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body, 1 Cor. xv. 42, 43.* Though it be still a body, and the very same body that it was before, as to the substance of it, (for otherwise it would not be properly a resurrection,) yet the qualities of it shall be much altered ; it shall now be an incorruptible, a glorious, a powerful, a spiritual body ; a body still, but endued with such spiritual qualities, that it shall be as active, as nimble, as tractable every way, as obedient to the will and motions of the soul, as if itself also was a spirit, for it shall then be raised to the highest degree of purity, glory, and perfection that matter is capable of, being made as like as it is possible to the body of Christ himself, who, as this apostle tells us, *shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, Phil. iii. 21.* And therefore, as he now doth, so shall *the righteous then shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, Matt. xiii. 43.*

Having thus briefly shewn what ground we have to believe that we shall rise again, in that our Saviour did so, and what we ought to believe concerning this great fundamental article of our religion, as it is revealed in God's holy word, I shall just mention some of the great uses that are to be made of this doctrine : first, therefore, ye may hence learn, whensoever you remember your Sa-

viour's resurrection, to think likewise of your own; and consider that as certainly as he rose again from the dead, so shall you too; that although your bodies shall return to the earth, out of which they were taken, and perhaps lie there in dust for many years together, yet they shall one day be raised up and quickened, so as to live again as really as we are now alive; and that as Christ therefore rose again, that he might be Judge both of quick and dead, so you shall rise again, that you may be judged by him, and either advanced to eternal glory, or condemned to everlasting punishment, according as you have or have not believed in him, and obeyed him; while you lived upon the earth; which I heartily wish you would not only believe, as I hope you do all in general, but that you would live in a constant sense of it upon your minds, so as to be always thinking with yourselves, that ye hear the trumpet sounding in your ears, *arise ye dead, and come to judgment*: for ye will one day as certainly hear it, as ye are now in this place, and hear me speak.

From hence we may also see, how much it concerns you all to take care how ye now live in the body. If ye were to die like beasts, ye might live like beasts; if ye had no other world to live in but this, it would be no great matter how ye lived in it; but seeing that when your souls leave their bodies, they still live without them, as really as they lived before in them; and seeing at the last day your bodies also will be raised again, so that you shall then live in them again, as ye now do, and that too, not only for some time, but to all eternity, either in a state of perfect joy and happiness, or else of extreme misery and torment, according as ye lived here in obedience or disobedience to the commandments of God your maker: if ye firmly believe this as ye ought to do, you cannot but be sensible how much it behoves you to endeavour all ye can to live in the true faith and fear of God whilst you are in this world; that so we may live happily in the next; which, blessed be God, ye may

all do if ye will but take care and pains about it, such as a matter of so great consequence requires; for ye have an almighty Saviour, the only-begotten Son of God, who, having been delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, is now the propitiation for our sins, and the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him, which I therefore heartily wish you would all do. Strive all ye can to live for the future in sincere obedience to all that he hath taught and commanded, and then you will find, by your own experience, that he will not only direct and assist you in doing his will all the while you live in this world, but at the last day he will raise you up to life everlasting, that ye may live with him, his saints and angels, in perfect joy and bliss for ever.

Lastly, from what ye have now heard, you may learn, what infinite cause ye have to thank God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as upon many other accounts, so particularly for that ye are thereby assured, that your bodies shall not always lie rotting in the grave, nor be scattered about in dust and atoms, but that they shall one day be raised to life again; and that if ye now fight the good fight, finish your course, and keep the faith, there is laid up for you a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give you at that day, and not to you only, but to all them that love his appearing, 2 Tim. iv. 7, 8. *For when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is,* 1 John iii. 2. and ever live with him, who liveth with the Father and Holy Ghost, one God blessed for ever.

SERMON LXXIII.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THE CAUSE OF OUR REGENERATION.

I PET. i. 3.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again into a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

THIS Epistle being written by the apostle of the circumcision, it is directed to all that were converted from the Jewish to the Christian religion, in the lesser Asia; who were elect, as it is here said, *according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*, ver. 2. that is, that they might obey the Gospel, and be sprinkled with the blood of Christ revealed in it, and so admitted into the new covenant, and be made partakers of all the privileges established in it, here signified by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, upon which the covenant was founded: as when Moses after the delivery of the law had ordered oxen to be sacrificed, he took half of the blood and sprinkled it upon the altar, and then read the book of the covenant to the people, which they promised to obey; after that he took the rest of the blood, and sprinkled it upon the people, and said, *Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words*, Exod. xxiv. 8. By the sprinkling of the blood

of the sacrifice upon the people, as it was a type of the blood of Christ, (the only true sacrifice for the sins of the world,) God signified to them, that they were now in covenant with him, and he with them ; that they should accordingly perform what they had promised on their parts, and that he would perform what he had promised to them by virtue of the blood now sprinkled upon them.

And so the apostle, writing to the Hebrews who believed and were baptized into Christ, saith, *that they were come to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel*, Heb. xii. 24. Where the blood of Jesus, as the *Mediator of the new covenant*, is called *the blood of sprinkling*, because it was sprinkled upon them, so as to wash them from their sins, and deliver them from the wrath of God ; as the children of Israel were delivered from the plague where-with God smote the Egyptians, by having the sides and door-posts of their houses sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb, typifying that of Christ the true pass-over, Exod. xii. 23.

These things I take notice of here by the way, that ye may see how it comes to pass that instead of dipping persons baptized, or washing them all over, as they used to do in hotter countries ; in cold climates it hath been all along customary only to sprinkle the water upon them ; for that being a sign or symbol of the blood of Christ now, as the blood of the sacrifices was of old, and the Holy Ghost having been pleased to signify the application of the blood of Christ by sprinkling it, as well as by washing with it, it was very obvious and easy to infer that it might be represented and applied by sprinkling, as well as any other way, if not in some sense better, forasmuch as this comes closer up to the phrase of sprinkling the blood of Christ, so often used in the holy Scriptures, and which may seem to be used on purpose to prevent the great mistake which some not-

withstanding have fallen into, that unless persons be dipped or washed all over with water, they are not rightly baptized: as if sprinkling the water did not represent the sprinkling of the blood of Christ, as well as dipping it; but this mistake is grounded upon another which was worse, even that the efficacy of the sacrament depends upon the quantity of the water, whereas it depends wholly upon the institution of Christ, and the promise he hath annexed to it, who therefore used a word in the institution, that in the original signifies only washing in general with water more or less, and so the sprinkling or pouring it upon the person baptized, as well as dipping him in it; and as in the other sacrament one crumb of the bread represents the body of Christ as well as the whole loaf, and one drop of the wine his blood as well as the whole cup; so here in our present case, one drop of water is as much as the whole ocean; and if any one part is sprinkled, the whole is washed and cleansed by the blood of Christ, as he himself also hath taught us; for washing his disciples' feet, and having said to Simon Peter, *If I wash thee not, thou hast no part in me*; the apostle saith, *Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head*. Upon which Jesus said unto him, *He that is washed needeth not, save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit*, John xiii. 10. whereby he hath sufficiently declared, that unless we be washed by him, we have no interest at all in him; and that it is not necessary to wash the whole, but that if any part of us be washed, our whole man is cleansed by him; which the said apostle, to whom those words were spoken, intimates also in this place, in that he expresseth Christ's washing us from our sins in his own blood by sprinkling it, which doth not use to be done upon the whole, but only upon some part, and yet hath the same effect as if it was upon the whole.

I should not have insisted so much upon this at present, but that we seldom have such occasion to mention it as the apostle here gives in describing the persons he wrote

to, and to whom he there wisheth that grace and peace may be multiplied, and then begins his Epistle with praising God for his infinite mercy to him, to them, and to all his faithful people, in these words, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.*

In which words are several things much to be observed ; I shall touch only upon these following. 1 That the saints of God are begotten again by him. 2. They are begotten to a lively hope. 3. This is done by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. 4. For this they have great cause to bless God.

First, I say, we may here observe, that the saints and servants of the most high God, such as St. Peter was, are begotten again of him ; *Blessed be the God*, saith he, *and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again.* But how can this be ? as Nicodemus said to our Lord, *How can a man be born when he is old ? can he enter a second time into his mother's womb, and be born ?* John iii. 4. But our Saviour resolves the doubt, saying, *Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, ver. 5. The original word is of the same signification with that in my text ; there it is γεννηθεις ανω, here αναγεννησας, and may be equally rendered either begotten or born, the one necessarily supposing or following upon the other.

How this wonderful work is effected, is past our reach to apprehend ; we know not how we were formed at first, much less how we are born again ; only in general we may observe, that all men that proceed naturally from the first Adam are conceived and born in sin, their nature is corrupted and depraved, so that they are prone of themselves to do evil, and unable to do any thing

that is truly good ; but when a man believes in Christ, the second Adam, and so is made a member of his body, he is quickened and animated by his Spirit, which being the principle of a new life in him, he thereby becomes a new creature, another kind of creature from what he was before, and therefore is properly said to be born again, *not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God*, John i. 13. The Spirit by which he is now actuated and influenced, being God himself, whereby it comes to pass, that such a man is quite altered from what he was, he is turned into another man, as Samuel said Saul should be, *when the Spirit of the Lord came upon him*, 1 Sam. x. 6. and all because, as it is said of Caleb, *he hath another spirit with him*, Numb. xiv. 24. which being the Spirit of God himself, his whole nature is changed ; for he now partakes of the divine nature, 2 Pet. i. 4. and is made in his capacity like to God himself ; and so is quite another thing, another kind of creature from what he was before.

This is that which the apostle means, where he saith, *If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature : old things are passed away, behold all things are become new*, 2 Cor. v. 17. His old false imaginations, unruly passions, and inordinate desires of the things of this world, are all passed and gone ; and, instead of them, he hath a new set of thoughts and affections, a new sight and sense of God, a new bias upon his mind, so that he is now as much inclined to virtue as he was before to vice ; and, of a foolish, proud, sinful, and carnal creature, is become wise, and humble, and holy, and spiritual ; and all by means of the new spirit that is in him, whereby he is made a new man, which is as different from the old, as that is from a beast, and more too ; forasmuch as both men and beasts are acted only by something that is finite, whereas the new man, or new creature, is acted and governed by the Spirit of God himself, which is infinite : and whereas other men are

born only of the flesh, such a one is regenerate, or born again of the Spirit ; and so there is the same difference between him and them, as there is between spirit and flesh, according to that remarkable saying of our blessed Saviour, *that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit*, John iii. 6. For every thing being of the same nature with that from whence it proceeds, as they who are born (as all men by nature are) of the flesh are carnal and sensual, so they are carnal and sensual like the flesh they are born of ; so they who are born again, being then born of the Holy Spirit of God, are thereby made holy and spiritual, of the same nature with him from whom they receive their new birth.

Hence all such are called the sons of God, and are really so ; for, as the apostle observes, *as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 14, &c. which he may well do, seeing it is he that makes us so ; for they that have received the Spirit of adoption have an undeniable title to eternal life, and it is that which all who are begotten again of God are born to, and they accordingly hope for it, not with a faint or dead, but with a quick and lively hope, which puts them upon doing all things requisite to their obtaining of it. This hope they are begotten to, the same Spirit of whom they are begotten again *witnessing with their spirit that they are the children of God*, Rom. viii. 16. and so confirming their hope of it ; *for if children, then they are heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ*, ver. 17 And if heirs, then they have a right *to the inheritance of the saints in light*, Col. i. 12. the richest inheritance that is in the world, for it consists of all things that are in the world, *they inherit all things*, Rev. xxi. 7 They not only have all things, but

have them by the way of an inheritance, as they are the heirs of him whose all things are, and joint-heirs with him who is appointed *heir of all things*, Heb. i. 2. This is that which the apostle here saith the children of God are begotten and born to, *even to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you*, ver. 4. It is not like the inheritances which men are born to upon earth, and yet may never have them, or may afterwards be cheated or deprived of them, and at the best must one day leave them; but this is reserved in heaven, in secure hands, where none can hinder them of it, nor take it from them, but they are sure to have it, and enjoy it for ever.

This lively hope and glorious inheritance, the apostle here saith, *they are begotten and born unto by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead*. It is only by him that we receive any mercy at all from the hands of Almighty God; we cannot so much as look up to him, much less expect any favour from him for any thing that we ourselves or all the creatures in the world can do for us, who have so grievously offended him; if we do but begin to think of his divine Majesty, as he is in himself, we are immediately at a loss, and confounded; our thoughts scatter and ramble we know not whither, and we can never gather them up, and fix them upon it, but by apprehending him as the Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who being both of his nature and our own, by him we have access unto the Father, and can have it no other way but by him, as he himself saith, *No man cometh to the Father but by me*, John xiv. 6. but by him the only-begotten Son, *which is in the bosom of the Father, and hath declared him to us*, John i. 18. By him we cannot only raise up our hearts to God, and contemplate upon his divine glory and goodness, but we can hope for all the good things that we can desire of him, in his name who hath merited them all for us by his death, and is now our Advocate with him, interceding for us that we may have them. This

s the way, and the only way, whereby we can seek God so as to find any favour in his sight; but by means of this intercession, which his only-begotten Son is always making with the Father for those who believe in him, we may obtain the greatest of all blessings from him, for we may be begotten again of him, and made his children and heirs; and therefore the apostle here doth not say, blessed be God absolutely, but *blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*: because it is as such only, even as he is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of the said Jesus Christ from the dead.

For he having suffered death for our sins, and being raised again from the dead, was exalted to the right hand of God, and made the Mediator between him and us: by virtue of which mediation he sends down his Holy Spirit upon all that believe in him, to regenerate or beget them again, and make them the children of God; and so it is written, *As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name*, John i. 12. He gives them this power by giving them his Holy Spirit to accomplish this great work in them, that as he is the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of his essence from all eternity, so they, who believe in him, may be begotten again of God, and so made his children by adoption and grace, which he could not have done if he had not been raised from the dead.

And as we are thus begotten again of God by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, so by that also we are begotten again to a lively hope; the resurrection of Christ being the firmest ground that could be made whereupon to build our hopes of God's mercy and favour, forasmuch as we are hereby fully assured not only of the truth of the Gospel, and of all that Christ ever taught or promised, but likewise that he hath made a complete sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction, as he undertook, for our

sins by his death, in that God was pleased to raise him again from the dead, and to set him at his own right hand to make atonement and reconciliation for us as our great High-priest, by virtue of his said sacrifice ; so that now there is no room left for doubting, *if Christ had not been raised, our faith and hope had been in vain*, 1 Cor. xv. 17 But now that *Christ is risen, and become the first-fruits of them that slept*, ver. 20. we have now all the reason that can be to have a quick and lively faith and hope in him for that eternal inheritance which he hath purchased for us with his blood, and for all things necessary to qualify and fit us for it : and the more to assure us of it, God himself hath here given us his own word for it by his apostle, saying, *that he of his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ*.

Now what infinite cause have we all to bless God for this unspeakable gift ? for, as the apostle argues, *behold what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God*, 1 John iii. 1. Yet this love hath the Father for all that believe in his Son Jesus Christ, for they are begotten again of God, and so are made and called the sons of God ; which is such an expression of his love and kindness, that we could never have thought ourselves capable of it, nor so much as have thought at all of it, if he himself had not revealed it to us ; who could have thought that such frail and sinful worms, as we mortals upon earth are, should be received into so near a relation to the almighty Governor of the world, as to be called his children ? that he who made us should likewise beget us, and so become our Father, as well as Maker ? This is so high an honour, so great a favour, that when I think of it, I cannot but wonder with myself that we are not all ambitious of it, so as to make it our only care and study to attain it ; for what is there in the world that we can spend our thoughts and time about to so great profit and advantage to ourselves ? By your care and pains

about the things of this world you may perhaps get something in it, and perhaps not ; and how much soever it be, it is nothing at all in comparison of what the children of God all have ; *all things are theirs* ; all things that God hath made, and he himself too that made them. And what can they desire more ? there is nothing more for them to desire, and therefore their minds must needs be at rest, and their souls as full as they can hold of all true joy and comfort.

Who then would not be in the number of these blessed souls ? Who would not be regenerate, and made a child of God, if he might ? and who may not, if he will ? Blessed be God, we are all as yet capable of it ; for now that Christ is risen from the dead, and exalted at the right hand of God, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and forgiveness of sins, if we do but apply ourselves to him, and believe and trust on him for it, his Father will be ours too ; he will beget us again in his own likeness, and admit us into the glorious liberty of his own children.

Let us therefore now resolve, by God's assistance, to do so ; and for that purpose let us exercise ourselves continually in the means of grace and salvation : using them only now and then will never do the business, but if we constantly and sincerely perform both our public and private devotions to Almighty God every day, attentively hear and meditate upon his holy word, and receive the sacrament of our Lord's supper as often as we can have it administered to us, and in the use of all these means look up to Christ, and trust on him to make them effectual, we may by this means attain such a true evangelical faith, whereby we shall be united unto Christ, made sound members of his body, and so partake of his Holy Spirit, to renew and purify us to that degree, that we may really become the children of the most high God, and by consequence live the rest of our days under his fatherly care and protection, carry ourselves in all respects as becomes his children, and at last

receive an inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith in Jesus Christ our Lord.

This they who are begotten again may well hope for, for it is to this hope that they are begotten again by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, which therefore was of such mighty advantage to mankind, that we can never sufficiently praise God for it. We have infinite cause to praise him for his incarnation, his birth, his life and death ; how much more, if it were possible, for his resurrection, without which the other would have availed us nothing ; though he took our flesh, we could not have had his Spirit ; though he was born once, we could not have been born again ; though he lived upon earth, we could not have lived in heaven ; and though he died for our sins, we must have died too, unless he had risen again, to apply the merits of his death to us, and to wash us in the blood which he had shed for us. Let us now therefore go unto the altar of God, and there offer up unto him the sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving for all the wonderful works that he hath done for the sons of men, and especially for his raising up Jesus Christ our Saviour from the dead ; and in the mean while let us all from the bottom of our hearts join with the apostle in the words of my text, saying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead :* to whom, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory now and for ever.

S E R M O N LXXIV.

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION THE CAUSE OF OUR JUSTIFICATION.

ROM. iv. 25.

Who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification.

THE apostle is here speaking of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and positively asserts two things concerning him, much to be observed of all who hope to be saved by him. The first is, *that he was delivered for our offences* ; he was delivered by his Father, *who spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*, Rom. viii. 32. He was delivered by himself of his own accord ; *No man, saith he, taketh my life from me, but I lay it down of myself*, John x. 18. He was delivered both by his Father and himself into the hands of the Jews ; they delivered him to Pilate the Roman governor ; Pilate having unjustly condemned him, delivered him to the soldiers ; the soldiers, after many horrid abuses put upon him, crucified him with two notorious malefactors, that were justly condemned and executed for their crimes. Jesus himself, the eternal Son of God, was thus delivered up to death, even to the death of the cross, and that doubtless for some sin too ; for death is the wages only of sin, therefore where there is no sin there can be no death ; but he could not be delivered for any sin of his own, for he had none ; and therefore, as the apostle here saith, *he was delivered for our offences*, for the

sins of mankind, as being of that nature in which he was so delivered. The malefactors which were crucified with him suffered each man for his own sins; but he suffered for the sins of other men, or rather for the sins of all men, and for ours among the rest. This the prophet long ago foretold, or rather did not foretel, but speak of it as a thing already done, because it was as certain to be done as if it had been done already; and it was looked upon as done from the beginning of the world, because God then said it should be. Hence, I say, the prophet, speaking of Christ, saith, *He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all*, Isa. liii. 5, 6. This also is the constant language of the New Testament, *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures*, 1 Cor. xv. 3. *He*, his own self, *bare our sins in his own body*, 1 Pet. ii. 24. *He suffered for sinners, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God*, chap. iii. 18. *He was made a curse for us*, Gal. iii. 13. *He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity*, Tit. ii. 14. *He was made sin for us, or an offering for our sins*, 2 Cor. v. 21. *He was the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 2. There are many such places in God's holy word, whereby we are fully assured from himself that his Son suffered death for us, that death which he had threatened against us as sinners, and which we therefore must have suffered in all our own persons, if he had not suffered it in our stead.

This I mentioned here, because it is necessary to our right understanding the other thing which the apostle here asserts of our blessed Saviour, even that as *he was delivered for our offences, so he was raised again for our justification*, which is the thing I chiefly intend, and

by his assistance shall endeavour at this time to explain, but could not so well have done it, unless I had premised at least so much concerning his death, upon which our justification is principally founded. I know that several men have undertaken to explain this doctrine several ways ; and although I do not deny but most of them may be brought at last to meet in the same thing, yet the way that some go is so intricate and obscure, and that which others take seems at least so remote to the truth itself, that it is no easy matter to bring them together. For my part, in this, as in all other points, I shall keep close to the doctrine of our church, as being fully persuaded that she in this, as in all other doctrines, delivers to us the true sense of God's word, according to the interpretation that Christ's holy catholic church hath always put upon it, and therefore hath always taught and preached for this purpose ; therefore I shall here consider two things :

I. What the Scriptures mean by justification, and how we are said to be justified ?

II. In what sense Christ is here said to be raised again for our justification ?

To understand the first, it will be first necessary to consider the term, or word itself, which we must know is a judicial word, a word taken from courts of judicature, where a man is said to be justified when he is acquitted, or declared to be just and innocent of the crime or crimes laid to his charge, and so not liable to the punishments which by the law are due to such crimes, and therefore justification is properly opposed to condemnation ; so we find it often is in the holy Scriptures themselves ; as where it is said, if there be a controversy between men, that they come to judgment that the judges may judge them, then *they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked*, Deut. xxv. 1. In the original it is *את הצדיק ודרשעו תא הדין והצדיק*, *they shall make the righteous to be righteous, and they shall make the wicked to be wicked* ; that is, they shall de-

clare or pronounce them to be so ; and that is their justifying the one, and condemning the other. Hence the Wise-man saith in the same words, *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination unto the Lord*, Prov. xvii. 15. Where we see justification and condemnation plainly opposed to one another ; so they are by Christ himself, saying, *By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned*, Matt. xii. 37 To the same purpose is that of the apostle, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth ?* Rom. viii. 33, 34. From whence it is evident, that the Holy Ghost useth this word justification, to signify a man's being accounted or declared not guilty of the faults he is charged with, but in that respect a just or righteous person ; and that too before some judge, who in our present case is the supreme Judge of the world, Almighty God himself ; and when he is pleased to discharge, or to declare a man free from the crimes that are laid against him, so as to account him a just or righteous person, then he is said to justify that man ; and this is plainly the sense wherein our church also useth this word in her Articles, for the title of the eleventh Article is thus, *Of the justification of man* ; but the Article itself begins thus, *We are accounted righteous before God* ; which clearly shews, that in her sense, to be justified is the same with being accounted righteous before God ; which I therefore observe, that you may not be mistaken in the sense of the word, as it is used by the church, and by the Holy Ghost himself in his holy Scriptures, like those who confound justification and sanctification together, as if they were one and the same thing ; although the Scriptures plainly distinguish them, sanctification being God's act in us, whereby we are accounted righteous by him, and shall be declared to be so at the judgment of the great day.

But as it is in Job, *How can man be thus justified*

with God ? or how can he be clean that is born of a woman ? Job xxv. 4. How can he that is a sinner be accounted righteous by the most righteous Judge of the whole world ? This, I confess, is a mystery which we should never have found out, nor so much as thought of, but that God himself hath revealed it to us in his own word, which, as it is the only ground we have to believe it, so it is the only rule we must go by in explaining it to you. According to which I shall endeavour to give you as clear an account of it as I can, in these following propositions.

1. No man is by nature righteous in himself ; this we are fully assured of by the word of God, where we find that the first man God ever made sinned against him by eating of the fruit which God had forbidden him to eat of ; and that all men being then contained in him, all likewise sinned in him, and became liable and prone to do so in their own persons. He, by eating that forbidden fruit, poisoned his blood, and corrupted the whole nature of man ; insomuch that all that ever did or ever shall proceed naturally from him, are conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, and therefore afterwards do nothing else by nature but conceive mischief, and bring forth vanity ; *for as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin, so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned*, Rom. v. 12. *They are all gone aside, they are altogether become filthy : there is none that doeth good, no not one*, Psal. xiv. 3. or, as St. Paul renders it, *there is none righteous, no not one*, Rom. iii. 10. *There is not one righteous ; not one just man upon earth that doeth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20. *for there is no man that sinneth not*, 1 Kings viii. 46. *and if any man say that he hath no sin, he deceives himself, and the truth is not in him*, 1 John i. 8. *for the law hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God*, Rom. iii. 19. *because all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*, ver. 23. and so are all under the

curse which God hath denounced against every one *that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them*, Gal. iii. 10. But this no mere man ever yet did, or ever will do, and therefore none ever was or ever can be perfectly righteous in himself, while he is upon earth.

And as the Scripture thus concludeth *all under sin*, Gal. iii. 22. so all men find it true by their own experience; for who can say, *I have made my heart clean, I am pure from sin*? Prov. xx. 9. No man except Christ could ever truly say it; for all that have any sense of the difference between good and evil, cannot but be conscious to themselves, that they have done evil, more evil than good, at least not so much good as they might and ought to have done, since they came into the world. If I should ask all here present, one by one, whether they do not know themselves to have done something they ought not to have done, or else not to have done something which they ought, I dare say every man's conscience would force him to confess it; and, whether we be sensible of it or no, I am sure this is the state of all mankind by nature. There never was a mere man upon the face of the earth free from sin, and therefore never any one that was righteous in himself; but every man, woman, and child, may truly pray with David, *Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified*, Psal. cxliii. 2.

2. No man can of himself do any thing, whereby he can merit or deserve to be accounted righteous before God. This I lay down as my second proposition, because some have conceited, that though all be by nature sinners, yet some may do such good works, and perform such obedience to the law of God, whereby they may deserve to be accounted righteous men: this our church denieth, saying, in the aforesaid Article, *we are accounted righteous before God, not for our own works or deservings*; and it is as contrary to the plain and express words of Scripture, where it is said once and again, *by the works of the law there shall no flesh be justified*, Gal.

ii. 16. Rom. iii. 20. And I cannot but wonder, how such a conceit could ever come into any man's head ; for seeing all men are by nature sinners, whatsoever any man doth by his own natural strength must needs be sin. A corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit ; a poisoned fountain cannot send out wholesome streams : as the man is, so are all his actions ; if he be sinful, so are they ; they are not done as God willed and commanded them to be done, and therefore, as our church saith, *We doubt not but they have the nature of sin*, Art. 13. And, by consequence, to say that such a man may be justified by any thing that he himself doth, is the same in effect as to say a man may be justified by his sins, or he may be accounted righteous for his unrighteous deeds, which is next door to a contradiction ; and suppose a man in doing such works acts not by his own natural strength, but by the grace of God ; and suppose again he doth never so many good works by it ; what then ? he doth no more than what he was bound in duty to do, how then can he deserve any thing by it ? and how so much that God should therefore account him a righteous man, notwithstanding the many evil works that he is guilty of ? And besides, if he did them by the grace of God, God is not beholden to him, but he is beholden to God for them ; how then can he merit any thing from God by them ? Did ever any man pay his debts by owing more ? or deserve his creditor should account him no debtor, because he runs more upon his score ? What a man doth by the grace of God, he is bound to thank God for it ; but he cannot in reason expect that God should therefore account him a righteous man, because he hath done one more righteous act by his assistance : suppose he had done ten thousand good works, and suppose that which cannot be truly supposed, that they are all perfectly good, yet after all the man is still a sinner, so long as he is guilty of any one sin, as be sure the best men are of many ; for any one sin denominates a man a sinner, and so long as

such, he cannot be accounted righteous, or justified by any thing that he himself doth, how great or how good soever it may seem to be ; *for whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all*, James ii. 9. and, if guilty, the law condemns him ; as if a man be accused of ten crimes before a judge, as suppose of ten felonious acts, although he be cleared of nine of them, yet if he be found guilty of any one, he is a felon, and must bear the punishment of the law : how then can he who is guilty of any, much less if guilty of all, as the apostle speaks, be justified before God ? Can a man be guilty and not guilty at the same time ? condemned and justified ? be found a sinner, and yet no sinner, but righteous, and that too in the eyes of God himself ? So absurd and ridiculous a thing it is, for any to imagine that any man can do any thing of himself, whereby he can be justified or accounted righteous before God.

3. Notwithstanding all this, there have been some men in all ages, and doubtless there are some now, whom God himself hath accounted righteous ; for we find several in the holy Scriptures expressly called so by himself. He calls Abel, *righteous Abel*, Matt. xxiii. 35. Heb. xi. 4. so Noah, Gen. vi. 9. Lot, 2 Pet. ii. 7. Job i. 1. Simeon, Luke ii. 25. Joseph, to whom the blessed Virgin was espoused, Matt. i. 19. and Joseph of Arimathea, Luke xxiii. 50. are all declared by God himself to be righteous. Zacharias and Elizabeth were both righteous before God, Luke i. 6. Our blessed Saviour tells his disciples, that many prophets and righteous men had desired to see those things which they saw, Matt. xiii. 17. Thus all along, both in the Old and New Testament, there is a frequent mention made of righteous men, men that were righteous in the account and esteem of God himself ; otherwise he himself be sure would never have called them so.

But how can these things be ? *Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right ?* Gen. xviii. 25. Hath not

he himself said, *He that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord*, Prov. xvii. 15. How then doth he do that himself which he abominates in others? These, which he calls righteous, were all the children of Adam; they were all men, wicked and sinful men in themselves, guilty of original, and guilty of many actual sins; how then can he justify them, account and declare them to be righteous? to be such as he himself knew they were not in themselves? This is the great mystery to be now unfolded; for which end we must lay down this as our next proposition.

4. Whosoever therefore are thus accounted righteous by God, must be so accounted from some other righteousness than their own in themselves; for it is plain, as I have shewn, that no man hath any righteousness of his own in himself, whereby he can be truly accounted righteous; and it is as plain that God himself accounts some men righteous, from whence one of these two things must of necessity follow: either, first, that God passeth a wrong judgment upon some men, by accounting them righteous when they really are not so, which to say is downright blasphemy; or else, in the second place, that there is some other righteousness in the world, which men may be so interested in, as to be truly accounted righteous by it, although they have none in themselves whereby they can ever be so. And seeing the first cannot, without manifest absurdity, this other consequence from the aforesaid premises must of necessity be granted, and then the whole mystery of our justification will lie plain and easy before us. For although, as the apostle saith, *God justifieth the ungodly*, Rom. iv. 5. yet if those, who are ungodly in themselves, can any other way procure to themselves true and perfect righteousness, God may justly account and declare them righteous for that, though not for any thing in themselves.

5. This other righteousness which men are capable of obtaining to themselves, whereby to be accounted right-

teous before God, is the righteousness of Christ. All the wit of man could never find out any other ; neither could this be ever found out but only by divine revelation, whereby we are fully assured, that God himself of his infinite wisdom and goodness hath made this way, whereby we may be justified before him, notwithstanding that we are not perfectly just and righteous in ourselves, or by any thing that we ourselves can do. But to make this as clear and manifest as I can, it will be necessary to proceed gradually ; for which end therefore we may observe,

1. Jesus Christ was perfectly righteous in himself. This none can doubt of that read and believe God's holy word, where he is often called righteous, Isa. liii. 11. 1 John iii. 1 which he could never have been if he had not been so in himself, there being no other righteousness which he could possibly have but his own. And besides, it is expressly said, that *he did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth*, 1 Pet. ii. 22. and that *in him is no sin*, 1 John iii. 5. and if there was no sin, there could be nothing else but righteousness in him. But I need not insist upon this, seeing no man could ever convince him of sin, John viii. 46. and therefore all must acknowledge him to be altogether righteous. I shall only add, that he was thus perfectly righteous and obedient, not only through the whole course of his life, but *unto death itself, even the death of the cross*, Phil. ii. 8.

2. This righteousness of Christ was the righteousness not only of man, but God himself ; for he being both God and man in one person, whatever he did being done by a divine person, must needs be a divine act, the act of God ; and therefore his righteousness is all along in Scripture called the *righteousness of God*. As where St. Paul, speaking of the Gospel, saith, that *therein is the righteousness of God revealed*, Rom. i. 17. And afterwards he saith, *But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being wit-*

nessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto all, chap. iii. 21, 22. And again; *For they being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God; for Christ is the end of the law for righteousness,* Rom. x. 34. Where he doth not only call the righteousness of Christ the end or full accomplishment of the law, but he calls it the righteousness of God, and opposeth it to a man's own righteousness. And so he doth too, where he desires to be found not having his own righteousness, but *the righteousness which is of God,* Phil. iii. 9. And this is that which Christ himself would have us seek before all things, because without this all things else will stand us in no stead, saying, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness,* Matt. vi. 33. his, not our own; but his so as to get it to be our own. And as all the righteousness which Christ performed in his life was the righteousness of God, so was that too which he performed in obedience to the divine will at his death. His life was the life of God, and his death was the death of God. So saith his beloved apostle, *Hence perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us,* 1 John iii. 16. Hence the blood he then shed is called, *the blood of God,* Acts xx. 28. because, although he laid down the life and shed the blood only of his human nature, yet that nature being at the same time united to his divine person, the life he laid down, and the blood he shed, was the life and the blood of God himself; which I therefore observe here, because the main stress of our justification lies upon it, as we shall see more presently. But for that purpose we must farther observe, that,

3. All the righteousness that Christ performed upon earth; whether in his life or at his death, was wholly and solely for us, and upon our account, in whose nature he performed it; for seeing it was only for us that he took

our flesh upon him, whatsoever he did in it must needs be for us only. He himself had no occasion or need of it for himself, but only as he had undertaken to be our Redeemer and Saviour, and so with respect to us and our salvation. He, as God, was not bound to submit to those laws which he had made, not for himself, but for men to observe; and as man, although it became him to fulfil all righteousness, and perform perfect obedience to the whole law as he did, yet he was not bound to perform divine obedience, such as his was, the obedience of a divine person to laws made only for men, which were not capable, and therefore he could not be obliged to perform such obedience to them as that was; so that the obedience of his whole life was more than was or could be required of mere men: and so was the last act of it, his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross; for though all the men in the world had died eternally, that could have been no more than the death of so many finite persons; whereas his was the death of a person that was infinite, and so was of infinite worth and value for all those for whom he suffered it, as was likewise all he did through the whole course of his life; by which means he really merited pardon, righteousness, and salvation for us, for whose sake only he did whatsoever he did in our flesh, which he took upon him only for that purpose. This is the true ground or reason of all his merits, or of his meriting so much as he hath done for us, because he did more than we were bound to do for ourselves, and he did it all for us; he was born for us, he lived for us, and he died for us; so that, as our church expresseth it in her Homilies, Christ is now the righteousness of all them that truly believe in him; he for them paid their ransom by his death, he for them fulfilled the law in his life, 1 *Serm. of Salvat.*

Hence he is said *to be made of God to us wisdom and righteousness*, 1 Cor i. 30. *and he hath made him to be sin, or a sin-offering for us, that we might be*

*made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. v. 21 In him, that is, by virtue of that righteousness which is in him, and therefore he is called, The Lord our righteousness, Jer. xxiii. 6. And he himself, whose Spirit, as St. Peter saith, was in the prophets, saith by his prophet Isaiah, This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord, and their righteousness is of me, saith the Lord, Isa. liv. 17 So that one may surely say, In the Lord have I righteousness and strength, chap. xlv. 24. for he that hath clean hands and a pure heart shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation, Psal. xxiv. 5. that is, from God his Saviour, whom David therefore calls, the God of my righteousness, Psal. iv. 1 And the same royal prophet, as St. Paul saith, describeth the blessedness of the man, to whom God imputeth righteousness without works, saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord imputeth no sin, Rom. iv. 6, 7, 8. for where he imputes no sin, he imputes righteousness, as the apostle here argues. But there is no other righteousness that can be imputed to us but the righteousness of Christ, that which he hath merited for us. And therefore it is by this, and this only, that we can be justified or accounted righteous, as our church hath declared in the Article of justification, saying, *We are accounted righteous before God, only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Art. xi.**

4. Although it is sufficient for all, and all are capable of it, yet none have this righteousness of Christ actually reckoned or imputed to them, except they truly believe in him ; but all that do so are justified or accounted righteous by it, faith being the means or true instrument, as it were, whereby we lay hold on it, and apply it to ourselves for that purpose ; as appears from the word of God himself, where it is plainly asserted, that *Christ is the end of the law for righteousness, to every one that believeth, Rom. x. 4. that with the*

heart man believeth unto righteousness, ver. 10. that God hath set forth Christ to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God ; to declare, I say, his righteousness : that he may be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus, chap. iii. 25, 26. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law, chap. iii. 28. Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, Gal. ii. 16. for by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses, Acts xiii. 39. But it would be endless to reckon up all the places where God hath been pleased to reveal this to us, I shall only add one or two more. St. Paul, discoursing of the Gentiles and Jews, saith, What shall we say then ? That the Gentiles, which followed not after righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness which is of faith. But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, hath not attained to the law of righteousness. Wherefore ? Because they sought it not by faith ; for they stumbled at that stumbling-block, Rom. ix. 30, 31, 32. Where we may observe, not only that no man can ever attain to righteousness any other way but only by faith, and that it is therefore called the righteousness of faith ; but we may observe likewise from hence, that this doctrine was a great stumbling-block to the Jews, and so it is to some Christians at this day. Men would very fain find something in themselves whereby they might be accounted righteous before God, and are very loth to be beholden to another, no, not to Christ himself for it ; but let them find another way if they can : for my part I desire to say with St. Paul, I account all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord : and that I may be found in

him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith, Phil. iii. 8, 9. And this I am sure is the doctrine of our church, delivered in the article above mentioned in these words, We are accounted righteous before God only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ by faith, or not for our own works or deservings.

But to understand this more fully, it will be necessary to consider what is here meant by faith, or believing in Christ, and then what hand it hath in our justification, or in what sense we are said to be justified by it. As for the first, I know that several men have given several definitions of faith, of faith which we speak of in this place, that whereby we are said to be justified and saved. I shall not trouble you with the private opinions of other men, much less with my own, if I had any about it, but shall give you the sense of our church and of the holy Scripture itself concerning it. Our church therefore, in the first part of the Homily or Sermon of faith, speaking of a quick and lively faith, such as the Gospel requires, in order to our justification, saith, that this is not only the common belief of the Articles of our faith, but it is also a true trust and confidence of the mercy of God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and a stedfast hope of all good things to be received at God's hand; where, as in several other places of her Homilies, she plainly makes the object of our faith to be all the good things that God hath promised in Christ, and the act itself to be a true trust and confidence of God's mercy through him, for the performance of all those promises: and that this is the proper sense of the word, as it is used by the Holy Ghost in Scripture, appears from the description which he himself hath given of it, where he saith, *Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen, Heb. xi. 1. It is the substance of things hoped for*; that is, whereas God hath been pleased to promise to mankind, in his Son Jesus

Christ, all the good things we can desire and hope for, according to the same promise to make us happy, faith is so true a trust and confidence in Christ for those things so promised, that it is the very substance of them, it causeth them in a manner to subsist in us, and puts us into the actual possession of them ; so that by believing, or, as it is expressed in the same chapter, embracing, the said promises, we enjoy the full benefit of them, and have them really fulfilled to us ; and it is *the evidence of things not seen*, that is, whereas God hath revealed many things to us in his holy word which we do not as yet see by the eye, either of sense or reason, yet, having God's word for them, we are as fully persuaded of them, and they seem as evident and certain to us, as if we saw them plainly before our eyes.

Now according to this, the true notion of faith, described by the Holy Ghost himself, as we hope for pardon and justification from Christ, according to the promises which God hath made us in him, upon our believing in him for it, we are accordingly pardoned and justified by him, because we are thereby actually stated in him, and made partakers of him, and of all that he hath merited for that purpose ; as the apostle saith, *We are partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end*, Heb. iii. 14. So that if we continue stedfastly to believe in Christ, we are thereby partakers of him ; and if of him, then be sure of all that is in him, as he is our Mediator and Redeemer. Hence, they who truly believe in him are said to be *one with him*, John xvii. 21. *to be joined to him*, 1 Cor. vi. 17 *to be in him*, 2 Cor. v. 17 Rom. xvi. 7 Phil. i. 1. *to dwell in him*, 1 John iv. 13. *to abide in him*, 1 John iii. 6. *as a branch abideth in the vine*, John xv. 4, 5, 6. *and a member in the body, for he is the head of the body of the church*, Col. i. 18. *and believers are all members, every one in particular*, 1 Cor. xii. 27. *yea, they are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones*, Eph. v. 30. *and so are united and*

joined to him, as a wife is to her husband, ver. 23, 31, 32.

This is that mystical union that is betwixt Christ and his church, betwixt Christ and all that truly believe in him ; by their believing in him they are thus united to him, and by virtue of this their union to him, they partake of all his merits ; as a branch partakes of the sap and juice that is in the stock, as a member partakes of the spirit that is in the head, and as a wife partakes of all the honours, estate, and privileges of her husband, so doth a believer partake of all the merits of Christ, by reason of his being joined to him, and abiding always in him. He was crucified with him, Gal. ii. 20. and he rose again with him, Col. iii. 1. He was in him, and with him, in all he did or suffered, and so he in him satisfied God's justice for his sins, he in him fulfilled all righteousness, and therefore he in him may justly be accounted righteous before God himself. He cannot but be so, upon that very account, because he is in Christ ; *for there is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1. And if they be not condemned, they must needs be justified ; and if they be justified or accounted righteous before God, it must be by that righteousness they have in him in whom they are so, for they have no other which can be truly so accounted ; but in him they have most absolute and perfect righteousness, because his was so ; and being his in whom they are by their believing in him, it is reckoned theirs too as effectually to all intents and purposes, as if it had been performed in their own persons.

By this therefore we may clearly see into the manner of our justification by faith in Christ ; for it is not, as some have fondly imagined, as if we could be wise by another's wisdom, or healthful by another's health, which we are no way concerned or interested in ; for we are accounted righteous by the righteousness of Christ, not as it is in him, and so another's, but as it is our own in him. We,

upon our believing on him, have by virtue of God's word and promise an absolute right and title to it, so that he is called, as I shewed before, *The Lord our righteousness*: and as he was the righteousness of God in himself, we are the *righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21. and he was *made righteousness to us*, 1 Cor. i. 30. And if it was made to us, then it is ours. To this purpose that passage of St. Paul, before quoted, is very remarkable, where he desires to *be found in Christ, not having his own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith*, Phil. iii. 9. Where we may observe two things: first, that he desires to be found in Christ; the only way, as I have shewn, to have righteousness or any thing else in him. Secondly, that he speaks here of a twofold righteousness, one his own in himself; and to distinguish it from the other, he calls it his own, which is after the law; this he disclaims, and desires to have the other, which is after the Gospel, the *righteousness of God by faith*: this he desires to have, that this also might be his own, though not in himself, as the other was, yet his own in Christ. And if he had it, as he sure he had, it must needs be his own, otherwise he could not be said to have it. And seeing they who believe in Christ are thus vested in his righteousness, so as to have it for their own, they may well be justified or accounted righteous by it, which otherwise they could not be. For as no man hath any righteousness in himself which can bear God's test, and be truly esteemed so in his account and judgment, so no man can be accounted righteous by any righteousness but his own. If it be not his own, he hath nothing to do with it, and therefore cannot be righteous by it; and if he be not righteous, he cannot justly be accounted so. And that is the reason why, notwithstanding all the righteousness that is in Christ, they who do not believe in him cannot be justified by him, because, not being united to him by faith, they have no interest in him, or his

righteousness. Though it be in him, it is not theirs in him, and therefore they cannot be esteemed righteous by it, no more than as if there was none at all in him; whereas they, who by their believing in him are possessed of Christ's righteousness as their own in him, they may truly plead it at God's judgment-seat, and need not fear but they shall be justified by it, according to the tenour of the new covenant. But so, that they who are thus accepted in the beloved, Eph. i. 1. must ascribe it to the infinite goodness and free grace of God, who might justly, if he had pleased, according to the first covenant, have exacted perfect righteousness and obedience from them, performed by every one in his own person, or for want of that have condemned them to everlasting punishment.

But here we must observe, that all who being thus in Christ are justified by his merit, they are also sanctified by the Spirit that is in him. As there is *no condemnation to them that are in Jesus Christ, so they walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit*, Rom. viii. 1. And *if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature*, 2 Cor. v. 17. Therefore a new creature because in him, who is made to us wisdom and sanctification; as well as righteousness and redemption; and all that are of him partake of all that is in him; of his wisdom to make them wise, and his grace to make them holy in themselves, as well as of his righteousness and merit to justify them before God; and seeing it is by believing that we are thus interested in him, therefore we are said to be sanctified as well as justified by faith; for Christ himself said, that *they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me*, Acts xxvi. 18. And St. Paul tells us, that *true faith works by love*, Gal. v. 6. but *love is the fulfilling of the whole law*, Rom. xiii. 10. and therefore whosoever hath true faith, he must needs do good works, all manner of good works that he is capable of doing, otherwise he may be confident that he doth not believe

as he ought in Christ, that his faith is not that true and lively faith that will bear a man out at God's judgment-seat ; for, as our church hath rightly declared, *good works do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith, insomuch, that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known as a tree discerned by the fruit*, Art. xii.

And this is that which St. James means, where he treats upon this subject, wherein some have thought he contradicts St. Paul, but that is a great mistake ; for St. Paul saith, that *we are justified by faith without the works of the law*, Rom. iii. 28. St. James doth not say, that we are justified by the works of the law without faith ; he only saith, that *a man is justified by works, and not by faith only*, Jam. ii. 24. where he plainly asserts our justification by faith, and only denies that we are justified by faith only, or by such a faith as is alone, without good works. It is of such a faith he speaks all along in that chapter, saying, that *faith without works is dead, being alone*, ver. 17, 26. and, that *Abraham had works as well as faith ; that faith wrought with his works, and by works his faith was wade perfect*, ver. 21, 22. but that he was justified only by his faith ; and the Scripture, saith he, was fulfilled, which saith, *Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness*, ver. 23. And this is that which St. Paul saith, and the holy Scriptures confirm all along, as we have shewn, even that we are justified only by faith ; but we are justified only by such a faith as produceth good works : so that no man is accounted righteous by his faith in Christ, unless it be such a faith whereby he is likewise made sincerely righteous in himself. Though after all it is not for his own righteousness in himself, or his own good works, that he is or can be accounted righteous before God, but only by the righteousness which he hath in Christ, there being no other that is truly and perfectly so in God's account. And therefore we may conclude this with the words of our church,

whereby she hath determined the whole matter in few terms, saying, that *justifying faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread, and the fear of God to be joined with faith, in every man that is justified; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying.* Sermon I. of Salvation.

All that I have hitherto discoursed upon this subject will receive great light from comparing the several states of mankind by nature and by grace together. Let us therefore take a short view of each of them. At first we know God made only one man, Adam; but he made him so, that all men that were ever to be in the world should by successive generation proceed from him, and therefore were all then in him. But soon after Adam was made, before any one as yet proceeded from him, God, having planted a garden, gave him liberty to eat of any fruit in it, except one tree; and, if he eat of that, he told him plainly, *that he should surely die*, Gen. ii. 16, 17. Adam notwithstanding eat of the fruit of that tree, and so sinned against God, and made himself subject to the death which God had threatened, and therefore could not in justice but inflict upon him; and all mankind being then in him, all sinned in him, all were corrupted with sin, and made obnoxious to death by it. Upon which our most gracious Creator was pleased of his infinite grace and goodness to raise up another Adam, his only-begotten Son, to take the nature of man upon him, as fully and wholly as it was in the first Adam, who therefore sanctified the nature of man again, by assuming it into his own divine person, and in it performed perfect obedience to the whole law of God, and in it also suffered the death which God had threatened, and so satisfied his justice which required the fulfilling of his word. Now, that particular human persons might receive the benefit of what he thus did and suffered in their nature, he was pleased so to order it, that as all men proceed from Adam by natural generation, so all, who would believe in him the second

Adam, should be regenerate and born again of him by that Holy Spirit which proceedeth from him, John i. 12. iii. 5. and so should be looked upon as really in him as they were in the first Adam, their nature in general being equally in both: hence therefore all who truly believe in him, as they incurred death in the first Adam, they suffered it in the second; as they were corrupted in the one, they are sanctified in the other; and as Adam's sin, so Christ's righteousness is imputed to them; it is reckoned theirs to all effects as much as if it had been performed in their own person, as it was in their own nature united to a divine person; and so they are justified by the second Adam the same way as they were condemned in the first, and made righteous by the one, as they were sinners by the other; as we are taught by the infallible Spirit of God himself, saying by his apostle, *therefore as by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life: for as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous*, Rom. v. 18, 19. which, I think, makes this whole doctrine as plain and certain, as words can make it; and therefore we need not insist any longer upon the explication of it.

But I must not forget what I promised to shew in the last place, even in what sense, or wherefore Christ is said to be raised again for our justification: which may be soon dispatched; for Christ having in our nature been obedient, even unto death itself, and so fulfilled the law, and satisfied the justice of God for us, it was necessary for our justification that he should still continue to apply his merits to us for that purpose, which he could not have done, if he had not risen again, and gone up to heaven, there as our Advocate to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. And therefore St. Paul lays the main stress of our justification upon this saying, *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's*

elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us, Rom. viii. 33, 34. Yea rather, that is risen again: implying, that all which he had done and suffered in our nature would have stood us in no stead, if he had not risen again, and ascended to heaven to make intercession, by the virtue of what he had so done and suffered for us ; without which, notwithstanding all that he hath merited for us, no man could ever have been justified or saved by him ; for, as the apostle saith, he is therefore able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them, Heb. vii. 25. And therefore it may well be said, that, as he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification.

Now, from this doctrine thus briefly explained, we may easily observe, that it is so far from encouraging men in vice and wickedness, as some have ridiculously imagined, that it is the greatest encouragement in the world to virtue and good works. No man in his right wits can be emboldened by this to continue in his sin, or the neglect of his duty to God, seeing that although he can be justified only by his faith in Christ, yet he cannot be justified by any faith, but that whereby he is sanctified also at the same time ; though he can be accounted righteous before God only by the righteousness which he hath in Christ, yet he can never be accounted so in him, unless he be made sincerely righteous in himself : for he is not in him ; if he was, he could not but be a new and holy creature ; and all that are not so may be confident they do not believe in Christ aright. Whatsoever they may fancy, their faith is nought ; it is not a quick and lively, but a dead and rotten faith, or rather it is not faith at all, such as the Gospel requires ; and so they will find at the last day, *when all men shall be judged according to their works*, as the Judge himself hath foretold us, Matt. xxv. 34, &c. They who have not

fed the hungry, nor clothed the naked; they who have lived all along in sin, and neglected their duty to God and their neighbour; they shall be condemned as criminals, as having lived in the continual breach of God's laws, which they could not have done, if they had truly believed in Christ; but they who exercise themselves continually in good works, in works of piety, justice, and charity, they shall be justified, though not for their works, yet by their faith in Christ, which will be itself justified and demonstrated to have been true and right, in that it produced such works.

But why do I speak of that? this doctrine is so far from encouraging men in sin, that it is the strongest motive, and the greatest encouragement we can have to do good. We cannot but be all sensible of our own natural weakness, that we are not sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; and therefore if we look no farther than ourselves, we may justly despair of ever doing any good work. Our only support and comfort is, that the grace of Christ is sufficient for us, that in him we have both righteousness and strength; such strength, that *we can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth us*, Phil. iv 13. But although we can do all things by him, yet seeing it is we that do it, we corrupt and frail creatures, we cannot but be conscious to ourselves, that notwithstanding his assistance, we can do nothing as we ought, nothing so exactly as the law requires, but do what we can we still come short of it, both in not doing so much good as we might, and in doing nothing so well as we should. So that should God be extreme to mark what we do amiss, he may justly condemn us for something that is amiss in the best action we ever did. But why then should we trouble our heads about doing good, when after all we can do nothing that is truly so; but when we have done all we can, we are still but where we were, guilty and obnoxious to the judgment of God? For my own part, could I have no other righteousness but my own,

no other but what I could attain to in myself, I should never think it worth my while to look after any at all, for I am sure I could never attain it. But when we consider, that although we cannot have any in ourselves, yet we may have perfect righteousness in Christ our Saviour; and if we sincerely endeavour to be as righteous as we can, and believe in him for it, he will make up the defect of ours with his righteousness, so that all we do shall be acceptable to God through him, 1 Pet. ii. 5. and we ourselves also accounted righteous in him, before the Judge of the whole world. This must needs inspire us with holy desires, and make us *stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, as knowing that our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. xv. 58.

Wherefore let us now resolve to take this course, seeing the eternal Son of God is become our Saviour, our all-sufficient, our almighty Saviour; seeing he was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, let us make it our constant care and study to offend God no more, but to walk in all his commandments, and in all his ordinances, to the utmost of our power, blameless; but when we have done, let us believe and trust only in our ever-blessed Saviour, both for the pardon of our sins, and for God's acceptance of us as righteous in him, and then we need not fear; for, being justified by faith, we shall have peace with God, through Jesus Christ our Lord: to whom, with the Father and Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, now and for ever.

S E R M O N L X X V .

CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AN OBJECT OF GREAT JOY.
AN EASTER SERMON.

PSALM cxviii. 24.

This is the day which the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it.

THIS is one of the proper psalms appointed for this day, and it is as proper for it, as if it was made on purpose to be said or sung at the commemoration of our Saviour's rising from the dead; for as the whole psalm, in the opinion also of the Jews themselves, hath respect to the Messiah, or Christ, this part of it points directly at his resurrection, it being here said, *the stone which the builders refused, is become the head of the corner*, ver. 22. For that the stone here spoken of is Christ, we cannot doubt, seeing he himself applies this place of Scripture to himself, Matt. xxi. 42. Mark xii. 10. Luke xx. 17. And how it is to be understood, we learn from his apostle St. Peter, who having told the rulers and elders of Israel, that the lame man, who stood before them, was made whole by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom they had crucified, and whom God had raised from the dead, he immediately adds, *This is the stone which was set at nought by you builders, which is become the head of the corner*, Acts iv. 11. From whence it appears, that the builders, which set at nought this stone, were the rulers and elders of Israel who rejected Christ, so as to put him to death; but that he, being

now raised from the dead, was made the head of the corner, and exalted above them and all things else ; all power in heaven and earth being given to him, upon his resurrection from the dead, Matt. xxviii. 18.

This, saith the royal prophet, *is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes*, ver. 23. He speaks, as the prophets used to do in the like cases, of what was to be done afterwards, as if it was then done, and ascribes it wholly to the Lord ; it was in a peculiar manner his act, and such an act, that, although we should always have it in our eye, we can never look upon it without wonder and amazement.

And then it follows in my text, *this is the day the Lord hath made, we will rejoice and be glad in it* : this day, whereon the stone which the builders refused was made the head of the corner ; this day, whereon Jesus Christ, who was crucified by the Jews, was raised again by the power of God, and made the head of the church, and of all the world too ; *this is the day which the Lord hath made*, which he hath made famous and renowned above all other days, by the extraordinary power and goodness which he then manifested to the sons of men, who have therefore infinite cause to rejoice and be glad upon this day.

And we could not choose but do so, if we did but rightly apprehend and duly consider the many and great benefits which we receive from our Saviour's resurrection ; which are so many, that it is impossible to reckon them all up ; and as impossible fully to describe the greatness of any one of them ; and therefore I shall not offer at that, but only endeavour to give you what light I can into some few of them, which may of themselves be sufficient to raise up our hearts to the highest pitch of joy and gladness upon this day, whereon we celebrate the memory of it.

First, therefore, by our Saviour's resurrection we are fully assured that he is the Son of God ; for God himself hath told us by his apostle, who, speaking of Jesus Christ

our Saviour, saith, *that he was made of the seed of David according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the Spirit of holiness, by the resurrection from the dead*, Rom. i. 3, 4. where he gives us a plain description of the person of Jesus Christ, both as to his human and divine nature: according to the first he was of the seed of David; according to the other he was the Son of God, and declared to be so with power, by his resurrection from the dead: the Son of God, in that sense wherein he himself had often said he was, who called himself *the only-begotten Son of God*, and affirmed that God was his Father, and he the Son of God, in such terms that the Jews judged him to be guilty of blasphemy, and condemned him to death for it; which they could not have done, if they had not understood him so as that, according to the common meaning of that phrase in those days, by calling himself the Son of God, he made himself God, and equal with God, as they said he did, John v. 18. x. 33. And so verily he did in plain terms, when he said, *I and the Father are one*, John x. 30. not one person, but, as the original word imports, one thing, one being, or one essence, which was declared or manifested to be true, by his rising from the dead; for if this, or any thing else that he said, had not been perfectly true, he would have been guilty of sin, as other men are, and so obnoxious to the death which God hath threatened against all sinners, who shall never rise again so as to die no more till the last day; and therefore his resurrection from the dead so soon after he died was as clear a testimony as could be given, that God approved and confirmed all that he had said, and particularly that he was indeed, as he had said, the Son of God, of one essence or substance with the Father.

The same appears also from the power by which he rose; for he rose by his own power: *Destroy this temple*, saith he, *and in three days I will raise it up*, John ii. 19. *I have power to lay down my life, and I have*

power to take it again, chap. x. 8. which could not be any other than the power of God; and therefore he, who had it in himself, must needs be God; for if he had been a mere man, and not God too in the same person, howsoever he had been raised again, he could never have done it himself; for when a man is dead, he is no longer himself, the person he was while he lived; but he being God as well as man, and both in one person, his manhood not constituting a person of itself, nor ever subsisting but in his divine Person, though one part of his manhood was separated from the other, he was still the same person that he was before; and whatsoever he then did, the same person did it; when he was raised from the dead, he raised himself, and therefore he is often said to have risen again, in an active sense, to shew that it was his own act; it was he that did it, but that he could never have done himself, if he had not been a divine Person, of another nature besides that in which he died and rose again; for that nature be sure could never have raised itself, neither could any other have done it but that which is divine, this being an act of infinite power; so that, by raising himself from the dead, he evidently discovered himself to be God Almighty.

But he is sometimes said to be raised by God, Acts ii. 24. xiii. 30. It is true; but that is so far from weakening, that it strengthens the argument, and makes it invincible; for seeing that he is sometimes said to have raised himself, and at other times to be raised by God, this puts it beyond dispute, that he himself is God; for otherwise the same act could not be imputed to God and to him too in the same sense, as it is in this case; and therefore, if there were no other, as there are many all over the Bible, his very rising from the dead was a sufficient demonstration of his divine power and Godhead.

Now from hence we may see what great cause we have to rejoice and be glad this day for the resurrection of our blessed Saviour, seeing that we are thereby assured that he is the only living and true God; for what

a mighty consolation is this to all that hope for salvation, that we have such a Saviour? a Saviour, who is with us wheresoever we are, and knows our tempers, our infirmities, our conditions, our necessities, and all our circumstances better than we ourselves do: a Saviour, who hath proclaimed himself to be *the Lord, the Lord God, gracious and merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth*, *Exod. xxxiv. 6.* a Saviour of that infinite goodness, that he will do what he can, and of that infinite power, that he can do what he will for us: a Saviour, who is *over all, God blessed for ever*, *Rom. ix. 5.* How well then may we sing this day with the evangelical prophet, *Behold God is my salvation, I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation*, *Isa. xii. 2.* and with the blessed Virgin, *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit rejoiceth in God my Saviour*, *Luke i. 46, 47*

And it is a great addition to our joy this day, that as our Saviour by his resurrection from the dead was declared to be the Son of God, so as man too he was advanced not only above all the sons of men, but above all other creatures whatsoever, by the mighty power of God, which he wrought, as St. Paul saith, *in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body*, *Eph. i. 20, 21, 22.* all which can be understood only of his human nature: it was only in that he died and rose again, and so it was in that only he is so highly exalted above all things else that God hath made; and it is no wonder, forasmuch as he in himself excels them all, there being no creature in the world so near to God as he is, none united to God: but only he; how excellent soever any of the

angels are, they are still but mere creatures, subsisting in no other but their own finite nature, upheld by the power of God, and therefore not comparable to him who subsisteth in the form and substance of God, and is personally united to him, so as to be God himself as well as man, *all the fulness of the Godhead dwelling in him bodily*, Col. ii. 9. which it doth in no other creature, and therefore he might well be preferred above all others, and be made their head and governor, the blessed and only potentate, *the King of kings, and Lord of lords*, 1 Tim. vi. 15.

Neither did he deserve to be so only for what he was, but likewise for what he did and suffered, the merits of his life and death being also assigned for the reason of his exaltation by the apostle, where having said, *that Christ Jesus being in the form of God, and yet having taken upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross*; he immediately adds, *wherefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. He was therefore so highly exalted, because he had been obedient all his life to his accursed death upon the cross, and by that means had brought more glory to God, than all other creatures ever did or could do; for the angels themselves can do no more than acknowledge the glory of those perfections which God had manifested in the world, whereas Jesus Christ made way for the manifestation of some of the divine perfections, which otherwise would never have appeared; for it is written, *the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, John i. 17. They were not given by him as the law was by Moses, but they existed or came by him, so as that without him they would never have appeared in the world; God

would never have promised any grace or mercy to the sons of men, no more than he did to the fallen angels, nor have manifested his truth in fulfilling the promises he made to them, but for Jesus Christ, in whom he made them; and therefore he, and he alone, having by his death made way for the exercise and discovery of these divine perfections, highly deserved to be advanced above other creatures, as the angels themselves acknowledged, when they said with a loud voice in the hearing of St. John, *Worthy was the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing*, Rev. v. 12.

But that which adds most to our joy and comfort upon this occasion is, that Jesus Christ, being raised from the dead, was thus *given to be head over all things to the church*, Eph. i. 22. To the church: it was for the sake of the church, which he had purchased with his blood, that this supreme authority and dominion over all things was conferred upon him; that all things being subject to him, neither his church itself, which is his body, nor any sound member of it, might ever be destroyed, *but that all who believe in him might have everlasting life*, John iii. 16. According to what he himself also said to his Father, *Father, the hour is come, glorify thy Son, that thy Son may also glorify thee. As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him*, John xvii. 1, 2.

From the premises thus briefly laid down, I should now shew what cause we have to rejoice and be glad this day that Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, and set at the right hand of God, at the very top of the whole creation. But who is able to do that? That the nature which we are all of should be exalted above all other natures that God hath made! that the man Christ Jesus should be made the Lord and Governor of all the angels and powers in heaven, as well as over all things upon earth, and in hell too! that he who loved us, and

gave himself for us, now lives and reigns on high, and doth whatsoever he pleaseth all the world over' that all things are in such entire subjection to him, that he can make them all work together for our good ! that all his power is given him for the benefit of his church, that all who believe in him upon earth may live with him in heaven ! what shall we say to these things ? where shall we find words to express the comfort they afford to all, who are the faithful disciples of this most glorious and all-powerful Saviour, *whom having not seen, ye love ; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory*, 1 Pet. i. 8.

Moreover, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, his whole Gospel is established, and our faith in him confirmed by God himself. The apostle tells us, *if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain, and your faith is vain*. And again, *if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins*, 1 Cor. xv. 14, 17 For if he had still continued in the state of death, he would not have been in a capacity to have applied the merits of his death, and to perform his promises to us, upon which our faith is grounded : whereas now there is no room left for diffidence, or unbelief, but we have the strongest ground that could be made, whereon to build up our most holy faith. For that Christ should rise from the dead was the great promise of all, upon which the rest depended. And therefore, seeing that was fulfilled, there can be no doubt but all the other will be so, to our unspeakable comfort ; according to that of the apostle, *we declare unto you glad tidings, how that the promise which was made to the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again*, Acts xiii. 32, 33.

Glad tidings indeed ! that whereas there are no sort of blessings but what are promised to us in Jesus Christ, all the promises are confirmed to us by his rising from the dead ; for that being an act of God, God himself

did thereby set, as it were, his hand and seal to them ; so that now we have no pretence nor shadow of excuse for mistrusting the performance of any of them, if we do but perform the conditions required on our part in order to it ; the chief of which is to take his word, and believe that he will make it good. They, who do not that, make God a liar : they reject, deny, and contradict his truth, which is one of the great perfections that are manifest, as I before observed, in Jesus Christ, and then they can have no ground to expect that the other, even his grace or mercy, should be shewed them ; and that seems to be the great reason why faith is so strictly required in the Gospel, in order to our receiving any benefit or advantage from it ; because without that we do not give God the glory of his truth that came by Jesus Christ, and so do what we can to frustrate the great end of his coming into the world, especially now that he is risen from the dead, and so hath confirmed the truth of all the promises, and is able to fulfil them all, and every one to us.

The greatest blessing of all that God hath promised, and, that to which all the other tend, is grace to repent and turn to God, that we may be duly fitted for pardon and salvation ; but Jesus Christ being raised from the dead, we may now most certainly have it by him ; for, as St. Peter saith, *God having raised up his Son Jesus, sent him to bless you, in turning every one of you from his iniquities*, Acts iii. 26. *For him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, chap. v. 31. And he is a Saviour, he saves us from our sins, and from the wrath of God that is due unto us for them : as a Prince at the right hand of God, he gives us repentance to qualify us for so great a blessing, and for that purpose he sends down his Holy Spirit to mortify the deeds of the flesh, and quicken us with newness of life, to enlighten, sanctify, direct, and assist us, in doing our whole duty both to God and man, so that *we*

can do all things through Jesus Christ; which sanctifies us, Phil. iv. 13.

This therefore is the first thing that we ought to believe and trust in God our Saviour for, who rose from the dead, that he might bestow it upon us; *for we are risen with him through the operation of God, who raised him from the dead, Col. ii. 12. that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, so we also should walk in newness of life, Rom. vi. 4.* which we may now all do, if we do but believe in him for his assistance and grace; and if we do it not, we may be confident that we do not believe in him as we ought, for he never faileth them who put their trust in him, *but they all receive of his fulness, and grace for grace, John i. 16.* all manner of grace and virtue that is necessary to the purifying of their hearts and lives, that they may be meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. This is the great blessing that we hope for from him who rose from the dead, and because he did so, and therefore may well rejoice this day, and praise God with the apostle, saying, *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for us, 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.*

When we are thus sanctified by faith in Christ, then we may well believe that we shall be pardoned and justified by him, *who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25.* For he having taken upon him our nature, and offered it up as a sacrifice for our sins, God, by raising him up from the dead, plainly shewed that he was fully satisfied with the sacrifice which he had offered him, and accepted of the death which his Son had suffered in our nature, instead of that which we must otherwise have suffered every one in his own person, and that all who believe in

him might be sure to receive the benefit thereof ; when risen from the dead, he was set at the right hand of God, and now sits there, not only as our Lord and King, but likewise as our High priest, making atonement and reconciliation for our sins, and as our Mediator and Advocate, pleading our cause, and interceding with his Father for us, that he would remit the punishments that we have deserved, seeing he had suffered them for us ; that he would be reconciled to us, and receive us again into his grace and favour ; that he would accept of our sincere imperfect obedience, though for the sake of that which he had performed in our nature unto death ; and that although we be not perfectly so in ourselves, yet that we may be accounted righteous in him, *who knew no sin, and yet was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him*, 2 Cor. v. 21.

They who have no sense of their sins, will have little regard for this doctrine, although revealed by God himself, and therefore revealed by him, that we may not despond or despair of his mercy to us ; but as for those who are truly sensible of their manifold sins and infirmities, that they have offended God, and are still prone to do so, this is their only support under the heavy burden that lies upon their consciences, and the greatest comfort they have on this side heaven, that they have not an High-priest there, who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin, Heb. iv. 15. That we have an High-priest there, who, by the one oblation of himself once offered, made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and for ours among the rest ; one, who perfumes all our devotions and good works with the incense of his own merits, so as to render them well-pleasing to God, notwithstanding their imperfections. That we have such an High-priest, who can wash us from our sins with his own blood, and such an Advocate, that he can justify us before God by what he himself hath done

and suffered for us ; what then need we fear ; *for who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect ? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth ? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 33, 34.

To add still more to our joy for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are thereby certified, that we shall also rise again as he did ; for as the same apostle argues, *Now if Christ be preached that he rose from the dead, how say some among you that there is no resurrection from the dead ? But if there be no resurrection from the dead, then is Christ not risen. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that slept : for since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive*, 1 Cor. xv. 12, 20, &c. This effect the resurrection of Christ shall have upon all mankind, though all shall not be saved by him, but only such as believe in him, yet all shall be raised up at the last day, whether they believed in him or no. And they that would not believe it before, shall find, by woful experience, that *there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust*, Acts xxiv. 15. *Marvel not at this*, saith Christ himself, *for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation*, John v. 28, 29.

What a glorious sight will that be, to see Adam himself, and his whole posterity, every body that was ever informed by a reasonable soul, all met together at the same place, upon that great and terrible day of the Lord ? it will be a terrible day indeed, to all that would not repent and believe the Gospel. But let them look to that ; I dare not speak of such now, for fear of interrupting the work of this day, whereon we are to rejoice

and thank God for the resurrection of Jesus Christ, which none can do heartily but they who are his faithful disciples, and obedient servants, who live while they are upon earth in his true faith and fear, doing all such good works as he hath set them, and trusting in him, and in him alone, for all things necessary to make them holy and happy for ever.

Their souls are no sooner out of their bodies, but they are presently with Christ, being carried by the angels, as Lazarus was, *into Abraham's bosom*, Luke xvi. 22. where they enjoy perpetual rest and felicity, the highest that they are capable of, while separate from their bodies. And at the last day their bodies will be raised up and united to them again, the same bodies out of which they went, as to their substance and all the essential parts of a body, but so rarely tempered, modified, and, as it were, spiritualized by our Lord and Saviour, that they shall be *fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself*, Phil. iii. 21. And then our whole man, both soul and body, will be brought into a state of absolute perfection, so that we shall never be distempered, or out of tune any more, but always cheerful and pleasant, always rejoicing, and praising, and adoring God, and the Lamb that sitteth upon the throne, always *shining forth every one as the sun in the kingdom of our Father*, Matt. xiii. 43. and all through him who as upon this day rose from the dead.

For, by his rising from the dead, we are assured also, and that by God himself, that he will be our Judge at the last day ; for it is written, that *God hath appointed a day, wherein he will judge the world in righteousness, by that man whom he hath ordained*, whereof he hath given assurance unto all men, in that *he hath raised him from the dead*, Acts xvii. 31. For, in that he raised him from the dead, he confirmed, as was before observed, all that Christ had said. But he had said, that *the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed*

all judgment unto the Son ; and hath given him authority to exercise judgment also, because he is the Son of man, John v. 22, 27 The original power of judging all men is in the Father, but he hath committed the execution of it to the Son, because he is also the Son of man, that so we may see our Judge sitting upon the throne in our own nature, and may be sure that we shall be judged exactly according to the gracious terms proposed in the Gospel, seeing it was he that made them.

And this surely is no small comfort to us, that we shall give up our accounts at that day to the best friend that we ever had in all the world ! that he, who is now our Advocate, will be then our Judge ! for now we cannot doubt but that we shall have all the favour shewn us that the Gospel itself can allow of, all that he hath promised, who hath promised all things that we can desire to make us truly, perfectly, eternally happy ; and, that we may be the more confident of it, he hath acquainted us beforehand with the sentence that he will then pass upon all that truly believed in him, and served him faithfully in this life ; to them he will then say, *Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world*, Matt. xxv. 34. In which blessed sentence every word affords us matter of extraordinary joy and comfort.

But that which is chiefly to be observed is, that he bids them all come and inherit the kingdom prepared for them ; it was prepared for them before, but now he gives them all and every one the actual possession of a kingdom, a whole kingdom, and that no less than the kingdom of God and of Christ, the kingdom of heaven, and the crown of glory ; called also *the kingdom*, Luke xii. 32. as if there was no kingdom in the world but that ; and indeed there is none that is worthy to be named together with it.

For this is a kingdom, whose Sovereign is the almighty Creator of all things, the chiefest good ; and the

subjects all pure and spotless creatures, saints and angels conversing familiarly together, as we do here with one another ; a kingdom, where there never are any wars, nor rumours of wars ; no fear of foreign invasions or domestic troubles, no strife or contention about any thing, every one having all he can desire. A kingdom, where all the subjects are of one mind, of one heart, and of one will, and that no other than the will of their Sovereign ; and by consequence there are no schisms or divisions among them ; no sin or evil of any sort, but all harmony and concord, love and charity, goodness, piety, and peace in perfection. A kingdom, where there is never any plague or sickness, nor the least indisposition of mind or body, nor ever any famine, scarcity, or want of any thing, but abundant plenty of all things that can any way contribute either to their security or satisfaction. A kingdom, that hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon to shine in it, *for the glory of the Lord lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, Rev. xxi. 23. by which glorious light they see all the glorious things which God hath done, and him too that did them : they see him as we see the sun, by his own light. A kingdom, where all, who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity, live with him they love, and behold the glory which the Father hath given him, who loved them so as to redeem them to himself with his blood, on purpose that they might live with him, and enjoy him for ever. A kingdom, where all the inhabitants, by the light of God's countenance shining so gloriously upon them, are continually enlightened, quickened, refreshed, glorified, and filled to the full with all the joy and happiness they are capable of ; though some may hold more than others, every one hath as much as he can hold, and so is as happy as it is possible for him to be. A kingdom, where all their work and business is to rejoice, adore, and sing praises to the Lord God omnipotent, and to ascribe blessing, and honour, and glory, and power to him that sitteth upon the throne,

and to the Lamb that brought them thither. A kingdom, that can never be shaken, but always continues in the same glorious and happy state to all eternity; for of this kingdom there shall be no end.

God grant that we may be all admitted into this kingdom, and, blessed be his holy name, we may all be so by him, who when he had overcome the sharpness of death, by his rising from the dead, did open the kingdom of heaven to all believers: let us then rejoice and be glad, and give honour to God for that inestimable benefit which we this day celebrate; and, that we may do it the more acceptably, let us go unto his altar, and there offer up unto him our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving, and dedicate ourselves wholly to his service, that, living for the future in our several places as becometh his faithful servants upon earth, we may at last be advanced to his heavenly kingdom by his Son our Saviour Jesus Christ; to whom, with the Father and Holy Spirit, be ascribed all honour and glory now and for ever. .Amen.

S E R M O N LXXVI.

CHRIST'S ASCENSION INTO HEAVEN PREPARATORY TO
OURS.

JOHN xiv. 2, 3.

In my Father's house are many mansions ; if it were not so, I would have told you : I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself ; that where I am, there ye may be also.

OUR blessed Saviour having acquainted his disciples that he must now leave them, and observing that they were much concerned and troubled at it, he takes occasion from thence to direct them how to keep their hearts from being too much cast down at the apprehension of that or any other trouble that might befall them in this world, even by exercising their faith on him ; *Let not your hearts be troubled*, saith he ; *ye believe in God, believe also in me*. Whereby he hath plainly discovered two things to us ; first, that it is his will and pleasure that his disciples should never suffer their hearts to be ruffled or discomposed at any trouble or affliction they meet with here below, but that they should walk through all the changes and chances of this mortal life with an even frame and temper of mind, equally ready to do or to suffer whatsoever God shall see good to require of them, or lay upon them, saying, *Let not your hearts be troubled* ; and then, secondly, that the most effectual means to do this is always to live

by faith in God, and in him ; *ye believe in God*, saith he, *believe also in me*. As if he had said, ye believe in God, ye believe that he made, and that he governs the world, and orders and disposeth of all things in it according to his own pleasure ; and you trust on him to preserve you from evil, and to supply you with whatsoever is really good for you : and as you thus believe in God, believe also in me. Believe that I am the Son of God, and am come into the world on purpose to save sinners : that I am able to save to the utmost all that come unto God by me, and therefore put your whole trust and confidence on me for the pardon of all your sins, for the healing all your infirmities, for the strengthening you against all temptations, for the making your sincere though imperfect duties acceptable unto God, and so for the bringing you at last to heaven. And do not fear nor doubt in the least but I will do it for you, notwithstanding that I am now to depart for a while from you ; for I am only going home to my father's house, where I will take as much care of you, as if I was still present with you, if you do but continue to believe in me : and therefore let not your hearts be troubled at my departure from you, nor for any thing else that may befall you in this world, but as ye believe in God, believe also in me, your Saviour and Redeemer. And then he adds, for their greater comfort and encouragement against all the troubles and difficulties they should meet with here below, *in my Father's house are many mansions*, &c

Which words, being uttered by Christ himself, afford so much matter of solid and substantial joy to his disciples, that did we but rightly understand, firmly believe, and duly consider them as we ought, we should never suffer our spirits to sink under any burden that is laid upon us in our journey towards heaven, but should bear it not only with patience, but with cheerfulness and alacrity of mind, so as to esteem it a blessing rather than a cross and trouble to us : for which purpose there-

fore I shall first explain them to you in the same order wherein our blessed Lord was pleased to pronounce them ; and then shew how much a firm belief and due consideration of them will conduce to the end for which our Saviour spake them, even to the keeping our hearts from being troubled.

First, therefore, our Lord saith, *in my Father's house*, that is, in heaven, which in holy writ is usually called by such names as signify some certain place where people use to dwell together : sometimes it is called a kingdom ; as where our Saviour saith, *Fear not, little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom*, Luke xii. 32. and, *Seek ye first the kingdom of God*, Matt. vi. 33. Sometimes it is called a country ; as in the Epistle to the Hebrews, *but now they desire a better country, that is an heavenly*, Heb. xi. 6. Sometimes a city ; as in the same place where it is said, *he hath prepared for them a city* : and elsewhere, *for here we have no continuing city, but we seek one to come*, Heb. xiii. 13. Sometimes it is called the habitation or house of God ; as where Moses enjoins the people to say in their prayers to God, *Look down from thy holy habitation from heaven*, Deut. xxvi. 15. And to the same purpose the prophet Isaiah saith, *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness, and of thy glory*, Isa. lxiii. 16. And so in my text our Saviour calls it his Father's house, which is the same in effect with the house or habitation of God ; but he calls it peculiarly his Father's house, the better to confirm his disciples in their hopes and expectations from him, by assuring them that he was not to go to any strange place, where he had no relation, interest, or acquaintance, and so could do them no service, but that he was going to his own Father's house, where he was sure to have all the favour that he could desire either for himself or them, as being the only-begotten Son of the Master of the house, who once and again had publicly declared the great love and kindness he had for

him, saying of him, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, Matt. iii. 17 xvii. 5. and seeing he was now to go to this his Father's house, to live with him, and to have his ear upon all occasions, his disciples might be confident, that he would be able still to assist and protect them, and to procure as much, or rather much more grace and favour for them, when he was gone from them, than if he had still continued with them; and this seems to be the reason why our blessed Lord calls it in a particular manner his Father's house.

But wherefore is heaven here called the house of God, or of the Father? Many reasons may be alleged for it, some of which I shall touch upon and explain, so that you may understand something of the purity, the pleasantness, and the excellency of that blessed place, at least so much as to make you think long till you get thither.

First, therefore, it is called God's house, because it is of his making or building, as St. Paul observes, saying, *for we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens*, 2 Cor. v. 1. And in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Abraham's hopes of heaven are expressed by his looking for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God, Heb. xi. 10. And in the Old Testament we often read, that the Lord made the heavens, Psal. xcvi. 5. cii. 25. Isa. xlii. 5. xliv. 25. yea, it was the first thing he ever made; for *in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth*, Gen. i. 1. First heaven, and then earth; where, as all along in the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for heaven is שָׁמַיִם of the dual number, to signify both the material and the immaterial heavens; the place where the sun, moon, and stars move and shine; and likewise the place where the holy angels live, and praise and enjoy God, which, to distinguish it from the other, is sometimes called the heaven of heavens, Rev. viii. 7 and in Nehemiah the Levites praying to

God say, *Thou, even thou art Lord alone, thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host*, Neh. ix. 6. where by heaven he means the sky or firmament; by the heaven of heavens that high and holy place where the blessed spirits behold the face of God, which as far excels the other heaven as that doth the earth, and yet this as well as the other was made by the Lord; it was his wisdom that contrived, and it was his power that raised this stately and most glorious fabric out of nothing; he only spake the word, and immediately the foundation was laid, the superstructure erected, and the whole finished altogether; and therefore David saith, *By the word of the Lord were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth*, Psal. xxxiii. 6.

But if God made this house, be sure it is well made, as well as it was possible for it to be, as to all the intents and purposes for which he made it; but he made it for a place of perfect joy, and bliss, and glory, to the holy angels, and the spirits of just men made perfect, where they might live in perfect rest and happiness, the highest that their nature is capable of; and therefore we may be confident that there is no sort of true and real felicity, which pure and perfect spirits can possibly enjoy, but what is there to be had in its highest perfection imaginable; for they live in an house which God himself made on purpose to be an house of pleasure for them, which therefore may well be called his house, as being made wholly and solely by himself.

And besides, as it was God alone who made, it is he alone who upholds, maintains, and preserves this house continually in the very same state and condition, wherein he at first made it, suffering no decay in any part of it, nor any thing to come near it that may so much as defile or annoy it, as we read in the Revelations, *there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither whatsoever worketh abomination, or maketh a lie*, Rev. xxi. 27 Hence it is, that there is no sin or

wickedness there ; for that, by reason of its contrariety to the pure nature of God, is the greatest filth and annoyance in the world, and therefore God always keeps his house perfectly clear and free from all appearance of evil ; insomuch, that so soon as ever some of the first inhabitants had sinned, he banished them immediately out of his house, lest it should be defiled, and so made unfit for his pure and holy creatures to dwell in : and ever since that time there never was, nor ever will be any, no, not the least sin imaginable committed there ; though there be innumerable inhabitants, there is not the least spot, or blot, or blemish in any one of them ; there is no ignorance nor error, no pride or ambition, no envy, hatred, or malice to be found ; there is no such thing as schism and faction, no rebellion, no sedition, no riots or tumults raised ; there is no swearing, nor lying, nor stealing from one another, no striving or contending about *meum* or *tuum*, no brawling or scolding, nor so much as an impertinent or idle word to be heard from any of their mouths, nor vain thought to be seen in any of their hearts ; but as holiness becomes God's house for ever, all that live there are perfectly holy in all manner of conversation, so as never to offend God, either in thought, word, or action.

O blessed place ! who can but long to be there, where we shall be thus perfectly free from all manner of sin, and by consequence from all manner of suffering too, where, as we shall never offend God, God will never afflict us any more ; no, this house is kept so absolutely clean and sweet, that there is nothing in it that can in the least molest or annoy those that dwell there, but, so soon as ever any are admitted into it, *God wipes away all tears from their eyes ; and there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain*, Apoc. xxi. 4. So that all the inhabitants of that blessed place live in perpetual rest and felicity ; they are never vexed or disturbed at any thing, for there is nothing that can possibly do it, every thing

falling out just as they would have it: as they have no aches, or pains, or distempers about them, so they are never crossed in their designs, never disappointed of their hopes, never interrupted in their business, never surprised by any accident, never lose any thing they have, nor want any thing they have not; by which means they are never discomposed or out of tune, but always of the same temper, always quiet and at ease; neither feeling nor fearing any thing to disturb or trouble them, for they are fully assured that their condition shall never be altered, but they shall always live just as they do, in that the place they live in is kept and maintained by Almighty God himself, and therefore may be truly called his house.

And so it may also, because it is of his furnishing: it is he alone who furnisheth this house with inhabitants, and with all things necessary and convenient for them; as for the inhabitants, he at first filled it with an innumerable company of immaterial or spiritual creatures, called angels, the greatest part whereof have continued there since the beginning of the world to this day, are there now, and will be so to all eternity; but some of them not keeping their first estate, but leaving this their own habitation, *God hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day*, Jude 6. And these being thus cast out of heaven, and roving about in these lower regions of the world, they found mankind made in the image of God, and so fitted to live in that holy habitation which they had left, which these apostate angels were so troubled at, that they sat upon the first man Adam, in whom the rest were all contained, and so far prevailed upon him, that he by their instigation sinned against God, whereby both he himself and his whole posterity were so far tainted and polluted, that they became altogether unfit to live in that holy place, from which the others fell; upon which God was pleased of his infinite mercy to set up another Adam, his only-begotten Son, who by

his dying in the nature of man should expiate the sins of mankind, so that *whosoever repented and believed in him might be saved*; by means whereof some men in all ages since the beginning of the world, at their departure out of this life, have been translated into this heavenly habitation, and so will many be to the end of the world, insomuch that it is very probable that there will be as many men saved, as there are angels damned, and so this house of God will be as full of inhabitants at last, as it was at first; but they must ascribe it wholly to the goodness and mercy of God, that they ever came thither, and therefore must acknowledge it to be his house, in that it is so wholly at his disposal, that none but he can ever admit one person into it.

And as it is he alone who furnisheth this house with inhabitants, so it is he alone who furnisheth it with all things necessary and convenient for them, with every thing they can possibly have occasion of, or can any way contribute towards their living as safely, as pleasantly, and as happily there, as it is possible for creatures to live; for they have all the accommodations they can think of or desire. They can desire nothing, but they immediately have it, or rather, they always have whatsoever they can desire, and so can never desire any thing which they have not; for indeed all things in the world are theirs, their proper goods and inheritance, as God himself assures us, saying, *He that overcometh shall inherit all things*, Apoc. xxi. 7 He, that is, every one that overcometh the world, the flesh, and the devil, so as to get to heaven, shall there inherit all things; all things shall be actually conferred upon him, so that every one shall enjoy all things in the world, as fully as if he was the sole possessor of them, or as if there was no person to enjoy any thing in the whole world, but only himself: all the true riches, all the real honours, all the solid and substantial pleasure that any thing in the whole world can afford them, are continually possessed and enjoyed by all and every one that is in

heaven, by which means they are as happy as it is possible for them to be, as happy as the whole creation, yea as happy as the Creator himself can make them. As they never fret, or vex, or grieve, or fear any thing, so they are always full of love, and joy, and peace, and goodness, and all sorts of true felicity as their souls can hold, always lively and vigorous, always cheerful and pleasant, always rejoicing, and singing, and praising God, who of his infinite mercy hath brought them thither, and out of the inexhaustible treasure of his own goodness hath provided so plentifully for them in his own house; and it may well be called his house, seeing all things in it are of his providing, and belong wholly and solely to himself.

Especially considering that it is the place where he himself is pleased in a more especial manner to reside, there it is that he keeps his court; that is properly his throne, as he himself saith, *Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool*, Isa. lxvi. 1. And therefore David, addressing himself to God, saith, *Unto thee I lift up mine eyes, O thou that dwellest in the heavens*, Ps. cxxiii. 1. And our blessed Saviour all along in the Gospel calls him our Father which is in heaven, and commands us to direct our prayers to him as residing there, saying, *Our Father, which art in heaven*; not as if he was not every where else too, but because it is there that he is pleased in a more particular manner to manifest himself, to unveil his perfections, and to shine forth in all his glory; insomuch, that this place hath no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it, for *the glory of God lightens it, and the Lamb is the light thereof*, Apoc. xxi. 23. xxii. 5. And indeed this is that which gives the greatest lustre, the highest perfection to the happiness of those who live there, that they always see God face to face, behold his glory, and enjoy his presence, and have the light of his countenance shining continually upon them, and influencing them so, that their whole souls seem nothing else but

flames of love and joy, arising from the full sight of God, and the clear apprehension of his special favour and goodness towards them, whereby they themselves also will be so enlightened as to *shine as the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. yea, our Saviour himself tells us, that *the righteous shall there shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*, Matt. xiii. 43. But what do I mean to offer at any thing towards the description of that place, *which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive it*; it is sufficient to our present purpose that God himself dwells there, and upon that account our blessed Saviour might truly call it, as he doth in my text, *his Father's house*.

In which he saith, *there are many mansions*; which words are not to be so understood, as if there were several distinct rooms or apartments in heaven, where every one might live by himself as in his own proper cell; for here they all live in common, and the whole house with all things in it is common to all and every one that is admitted into it, every one enjoying it as much as if there were none to enjoy it but himself, as I observed before.

But what then doth our Saviour mean, by saying, *In my Father's house are many mansions*.

His meaning in short is, that heaven is a very large capacious place, able to receive and entertain a great many people. The apostles were very much grieved to hear that their Master was to leave them, although it was in order to his going to heaven, as not well knowing as yet whether they could follow him thither, or whether there was room enough for him and them too, as considering that he would have a vast train of holy angels about him, which might fill up the whole place; but our Lord bids them be of good cheer, assuring them that his Father's house, whither he was going, is a place

of very great reception, *there are many mansions in it*, abundance of room, enough for them and many more, even for all that should ever believe in him.

And indeed heaven must needs be a very large place that can hold such a multitude of inhabitants which are already in it. The holy angels, the ancient inhabitants of the place, which have lived there ever since it was first founded, are doubtless very many, so many, that I question whether they themselves can tell how many they are. Daniel, in a short vision he had of the place, saw *thousands of thousands* there *ministering unto God, and ten thousand times ten thousand standing before him*, Dan. vii. 10. And St. John, having had the like vision, saith, *I beheld, and heard the voice of many angels round about the throne and the beasts and the elders ; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand*, Rev. v. 11. that is, they were so many, that they exceeded his arithmetic. And as for the children of men, whom Christ had purchased with his own blood to live with him in that holy place, the same St. John, in another vision, saw an hundred forty and four thousand of all the tribes of the children of Israel ; and after this, saith he, *I beheld, and lo a great multitude, which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the Lord, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands*, Rev. vii. 9. From whence we may observe by the way, that when our Saviour calls his flock *a little flock*, and saith, that *there are but few that find the way to life*, he is to be understood only comparatively, that his flock is but little in comparison of the multitude that follow after sin, the world, and the devil, and that there are but few who find the way to life, in comparison of the many who miss of it, which, notwithstanding, considered absolutely and in themselves, are certainly very many ; as our Lord himself here intimates, by saying, that *in my Father's house are many mansions* ; where there were great multitudes, not only of

angels, but likewise of saints, residing in St. John's time, and many have been going to them ever since, and still are, and ever will be, to the end of the world.

And why may not you and I be in the number of them as well as other people? If we be not, we must even blame ourselves. Be sure there is room enough for us there, as well as for others; for Christ himself hath told us, *there are many mansions in his Father's house*, on purpose to excite and encourage us to look after it; and if we do but set ourselves in good earnest about it, and apply ourselves to him for it, we cannot possibly fail of coming thither, for he himself hath assured us, that he is gone before to prepare a place for us. *If it were not so*, saith he, *I would have told you*; as if he had said, If there had not been room enough for you, as well as for me and others, in my Father's house, I would have acquainted you with it, that so your expectations might not be frustrated; for I would not impose upon you, nor flatter you with vain hopes of living with me in the other world, if there was no ground for you to expect it; but you have all the reason in the world to expect it, seeing that I myself assure you *there are many mansions in my Father's house*; and that I am now going thither on purpose to prepare a place for you.

From whence we may observe by the way, how careful our blessed Saviour was to conceal nothing from us that might any way conduce either to our salvation or comfort. *If it was not so*, saith he, *I would have told you*; and so he certainly would have told us many other things, which he hath not, if it had been necessary for us to have known them; and therefore we may conclude, that whatsoever he hath not told us, it is no matter whether we know it or no. There are a great many nice questions raised in divinity, especially by the schoolmen, which have perplexed the minds of the greatest scholars, and have caused great heats and animosities in the church, but they are generally of such things, which our blessed Master never thought good to determine,

nor to tell us any thing of them, which he would not have failed to have done, if either our future happiness or our present comfort were any way concerned in the knowledge of them ; which I therefore observe unto you, that so you may not trouble your heads with any impertinent controversies about our holy religion, which serve only to amuse and distract men's minds, and to divert them from what is substantial and necessary ; what Christ hath taught you, either with his own mouth, or by his apostles, that you must believe and act accordingly, if you expect to be saved by him ; but as for other things, let others dispute about them if they please, but do you rest satisfied in your own minds, that if it had been necessary for you to have known them, Christ would have told you of them, as he assures his apostle, saying, *If it was not so, I would have told you.*

And then he adds, *I go to prepare a place for you ;* he doth not say, I go to make room for you, as if there was not room enough made already ; but *I go to prepare a place for you*, to take care that you as well as other persons may have room there ; and he repeats it again in the same words, saying immediately, *and if I go and prepare a place for you ;* to shew that this is a thing which he would have us take special notice of, and to carry it always in our minds, that it is by him only that we can get to heaven ; that it is he, and he alone, that prepares a place for us in his *Father's house*, and therefore it must needs behove us very much rightly to understand his full intent and meaning in these words.

For which purpose therefore we must consider first, that our blessed Saviour having done and suffered all that was necessary for our redemption and salvation upon earth, he was then taken up to heaven, where he hath been ever since, and ever will be, sitting at the right hand of God ; that is, he is exalted above all the creatures in the world, and vested with absolute power and dominion over them, as St. Peter informs us, saying, *that Christ is gone to heaven, and is on the right hand*

of God ; angels and authorities and powers being made subject to him, 1 Pet. iii. 22. And to the same purpose St. Paul saith, that God, having raised Christ from the dead, set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but likewise in that to come, Eph. i. 20, 21 And elsewhere, that God hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, Phil. ii. 9, 10, 11. The meaning of all which is, that Christ Jesus was no sooner got to heaven, but he was immediately advanced above all the creatures in the world, that the very angels and archangels themselves were obliged to own him for their Lord, and to do him homage ; that all power is committed unto him both in heaven and earth, so that he can do whatsoever he pleaseth in the whole world ; that no creature can resist his will, nor oppose his authority, when he sees good to exercise it ; that all places are at his disposal, both in the church triumphant in heaven, and in that which is militant here on earth ; that he reigns above as King of kings, and Lord of lords, yea, as the Ruler and Governor of the whole creation ; that not only angels and men, but the very devils themselves are subject to him, and can do nothing without his command or leave ; that he can pardon or condemn, he can save or destroy, he can take in or shut out of heaven whom he pleaseth ; in short, that he is an absolute Monarch over the whole world, so that we and all things in it are wholly at his command ; he may do with us what he will, there is no withstanding of him, no appeal from him, for he is the supreme Judge both of quick and dead, both of men and angels ; they are all as equally subject to him, and shall be all equally judged by him ; for, as he himself saith, *the Father judgeth*

no man, but hath committed all judgment to the Son, that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father, John v. 22, 23.

But what is all this to us? Are we concerned any more than other creatures in Christ's exaltation at the right hand of God? Yes, certainly, very much; for he having taken our nature upon him, whatsoever he did, or was done to him in that, was wholly for us, and upon our account; he was born for us, as the prophet saith, *Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given, Isa. ix. 6. He suffered for us, leaving us an example, that we should follow his steps, 1 Pet. ii. 21. He bare our griefs, and carried our sorrows; he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed, Isa. liii. 4, 5. He was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor v. 21. He is made unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, 1 Cor. i. 30. And as he was delivered for our offences, he was raised again for our justification, Rom. iv. 25. And so, when he went to heaven, he went thither on purpose to appear in the presence of God for us, Heb. ix. 24. and therefore St. Paul, having said that Christ is exalted far above all principality and power, presently adds, *that God put all things under his feet, and gave him to be Head over all things in the church, which is his body, Eph. i. 22, 23.* Where we may observe, that as Christ is made Head or Governor over all things, he is made so to the church, for the sake of his church, that he may order and dispose of all things for the good of it, and of all the sound members in it; which plainly shews, that Christ's advancement to so high a degree of glory and power in heaven, is of mighty advantage to us upon earth.*

But you will say perhaps, what doth he there do for us? What? more, doubtless, than we are able to understand; but, that we may understand it as fully as we are

able in this life, he is represented as being our Advocate with the Father; so St. John calls him, saying, *If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is a propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole world*, 1 John ii. 1, 2. An advocate we know is one that pleads in the behalf of a person accused, shewing cause why he ought not to be condemned. Now, saith the apostle, *if any man sin*, that is, if any man hath committed such a sin for which he fears he shall be condemned, let such a one remember that we have an Advocate with the Father, no less a person than his own Son, Jesus Christ the righteous, who being himself a propitiation for our sins, may well plead that we ought not to be condemned for them, seeing he himself hath borne all the punishment that was due unto them, and so can easily bring us off, and obtain a full discharge and pardon for us.

As it was typified also in the old law; for the high-priest once every year, even upon the day of expiation, having killed the goat of the sin-offering, brought some of the blood of it into the holy of holies, and there sprinkling it upon and before the mercy-seat, made thereby an atonement for the whole congregation; and then laid his hands upon the head of the scape-goat, confessing over him all the sins of the people, and so putting them upon the head of the goat, sent him away into the wilderness, never to be heard of more: so Christ, our High-priest, having offered up himself as a sacrifice for our sins, he entered into the holy of all holies, into heaven itself, and there, by virtue of that blood which he shed, makes such an effectual atonement for all our sins, that they are presently carried away, nobody knows whither, so as never to be heard of any more, than as if they had never been committed, Lev. xvi. Heb. vii.

And hence it is that he is called a *Mediator betwixt God and man*, 1 Tim. ii. 5. one who makes up all differences betwixt us, reconciling God to us, and us to God; and

for the same reason he is said also to make intercession for us, to intercede with his Father that he would not be angry with us, nor punish us for our sins, but that he would accept of his sufferings for us, as a full recompence and satisfaction for all the wrongs and injuries that we have done him; which he doth so effectually, that St. Paul challengeth the whole world to shew any reason why they who believe in Christ, and obey his Gospel, should be condemned, saying, *Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*, Rom. viii. 33, 34. *Who also maketh intercession for us*; there lies the whole stress of the business, that our blessed Saviour, who suffered for our sins upon earth, is now making intercession for us in heaven; for it is by this means that he applies the merits of his death unto us, both for the pardon of our sins, and for the enduing us with grace and power to forsake them, together with all the other blessings which he hath purchased for us. He intercedes with his Father on our behalf, and prays him to bestow them upon us.

And Christ be sure never prays in vain, but whatsoever he asketh of the Father is always granted. When he was upon earth he could say to his Father, *I know that thou hearest me always*, John xvii. 42. how much more, if it were possible, now he is in heaven, and hath actually merited all the good things that he can ever desire for us? there certainly, whatsoever he desires, he immediately hath it, as we see in that remarkable promise he made to his disciples, *I will pray the Father, saith he, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever, even the Spirit of truth*, John xiv. 16. This was the greatest thing that he could ever pray for, and yet he was no sooner got to heaven, but the Spirit of God was given to them in a miraculous manner, by which we see, both

that he had prayed according to his promise, and that his prayer was heard ; and so it always is, by which means he can do what he will for us, for it is but his willing it to be done, and immediately it is so : and this indeed is the proper notion of Christ's mediation or intercession for us ; for we must not think that he makes any solemn prayers to his Father, as we do, or at least ought to do ; no, whatsoever he would have, he only actually wills it should be so, and presently it is just so as he would have it ; which is the greatest comfort in the world to all that believe in him, and the greatest encouragement for us all to do so ; for as we have no ground to mistrust his good will towards us, who so loved us as to give himself for us, we have as little to mistrust his power, who can do what he will for us, but may well conclude with the apostle, *that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them*, Heb. vii. 25.

From hence therefore we may easily understand how truly our Lord here saith, *I go to prepare a place for you* ; for seeing that when he went from hence he was carried directly into heaven, seeing when he came thither he had all power immediately conferred upon him, and seeing he there exerciseth that power continually for us, in order to his bringing us at last to himself in heaven, he may be properly said to prepare a place for us there, and to go thither for that purpose, that being the great end of his ascension into heaven, and of his exaltation there, even that he might from thence supply us with whatsoever is necessary to our following him thither, that we may be actually possessed of that happiness, which he hath bought for us with the price of his own blood ; to which, it being absolutely necessary that we repent of our sins, and so have them pardoned, therefore it is said, *that God hath exalted Christ with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins*, Acts v. 31.

Under which is comprehended whatsoever is required, or can any way contribute, to our being saved by him.

For which purpose therefore, Christ being now in his human nature at the right hand of God in heaven, and in his divine nature always present with us upon earth too, he often puts us in mind of the evil of sin in itself, and of the dismal effects it will have upon us, if we continue in it. He stirs up our hatred of it, strengthens our resolutions against it, and assists our endeavours to forsake and avoid it. He, by the sweet influences of his Holy Spirit, inflames our minds with the love of God, and with sincere desires to serve and please him; he prevents our falling into temptations, or gives us power to withstand and overcome them; he sanctifies all occurrences to us, so as to make them work together for our good; he gives us opportunities of exercising our faith, and fear, and trust on God; our patience, humility, meekness, self-denial, and all other virtues, and assists us in the exercise of them; he affords us the means of grace, and co-operates with them, that so they may be effectual to us; when we read or hear the word of God, he opens our eyes to see, and our hearts to receive the truth in the love of it; when we are at our devotions, he assists us in the performance of them, and perfumes them with the incense of his own merits, that God may be well-pleased with them; when we are at the holy sacrament, he stands by us, and feeds us with the spiritual food of his own most blessed body and blood; when we are in straits, and know not which way to take, he directs us to that which shall be most for our advantage; when any trouble falls upon us, he either takes it off, or else gives us strength to bear, and grace to make a good use of it; when by any surprise, or indisposition of body, our minds are disordered and out of tune, he composeth and brings them into a right frame again; when we are about any good work, he is at both ends of it, and in the middle too, assisting us in the doing of it, and interceding with his Father to accept

of it when it is done. In short, he leads and directs us through the whole course of our lives, till he hath made us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light, and then he brings us to it, and gives us the full possession of it. And he who went thither on purpose that he might thus prepare us for heaven, as well as heaven for us, might well say, *I go to prepare a place for you.*

And then he adds, *and if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself.* But what? will he not receive us before that? Yes, certainly, he will receive our souls so soon as ever they depart out of our bodies, as we may gather from what he himself said to the thief upon the cross, *To-day shalt thou be with me in paradise,* Luke xxiii. 43. For from hence it is evident, that although the penitent's body was to be laid in the earth, yet his soul was to be carried the very same day he died directly to Christ, in paradise or heaven, where he then was as God, although his manhood ascended not till some days after. The same appears from St. Paul's *desire to depart, and be with Christ,* Phil. i. 23. Which plainly shews that he firmly believed that he should be with Christ so soon as ever he departed out of this life. But the clearest demonstration of this great truth, and that which puts it beyond all doubt, is taken from St. Stephen, who, being just at the point of death, committed his soul into the hands of Christ, saying, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit,* Acts vii. 59. which questionless he would not have done, had he not been fully assured by the Holy Ghost, that Christ would, according to his desire, receive his spirit unto himself, at the same moment that it left his body; and so doubtless every soul that ever departed out of this life in the true faith of Christ, is now with him in heaven, his holy angels carrying it, as they did Lazarus, directly thither.

But what then doth our Lord mean by his coming again, and receiving us to himself then? His meaning

in short is, that although he was now to leave this world, and go up to heaven, there to continue many years, preparing a place for us, yet at the last day, when the whole number of his elect shall be accomplished, he will come hither again, and then he will receive us altogether, both soul and body, and so our whole man unto himself ; that so the same persons, who believed in him and served him upon earth, may live with him for evermore in heaven, as he himself hath promised in the following words, saying, *I will come again and receive you to myself, that where I am there ye may be also.*

This he knew would revive and rejoice his disciples' hearts exceedingly, that they should live with him in the other world, and therefore he is often pleased to put them in mind of it ; *If any man serve me, saith he, let him follow me, and where I am, there shall my servant be,* John xii. 26. And elsewhere he saith, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne,* Apoc. iii. 21 And that we may be sure to do so, he prays to the Father for it, saying, *Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory,* John xvii. 24. Where we may take notice also how he prays or intercedes for us, even by signifying his will to have it so, as I observed before ; *Father, I will,* saith he, *that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me.* And what could we ourselves have desired more, nay, what could Christ himself have desired more for us than this, that we may live with him ? for if we live with him, we shall live with the best friend that we have in the whole world, and whom we love above all things in it ; with him who loved us too, and gave himself for us ; with him who took all our sins upon himself, who bore all the shame and pain that was due unto us for them ; with him who was derided, scoffed at, buffeted, scourged, crowned with thorns, arraigned, con-

demned, crucified, and all for us ; with him who washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests to God and the Father ; with him who saves us from our enemies, and delivers us out of the hands of all that hate us ; with him who gives us all things necessary both for life and godliness, and enables us to make a right use of them ; with him who is now interceding and preparing a place for us on purpose that we may live with him in heaven ; in heaven, where he will fashion our vile bodies, that they may be like his glorious body, and make our souls perfect like his own, that so we may be fit to keep him company, where he will always smile upon us, and manifest his special love and kindness to us ; where he will shine forth in all his glory before us, and keep our eyes always open to behold it ; where he will advance us to the highest degrees of honour that we are capable of, and fill us as full of all true joy and comfort as our souls can hold. In a word, where we shall live with him, our dearest Lord and ever-blessed Saviour, not only for some time, but for ever and ever, as his apostle hath taught us, saying, that *we who shall be alive and remain at the last day, shall meet the Lord in the air, and so shall be ever with the Lord*, 1 Thess. iv. 17 and then adds, *wherefore comfort one another with these words*.

And well may he add that, for this certainly is the greatest comfort that a true Christian can ever have, insomuch that it hath prevented me in that which I promised to shew in the last place, even that the consideration of these things should keep our hearts from being troubled at any thing we meet with here below ; for if we firmly believe, and duly consider these words of our blessed Saviour, and what we have now heard upon them, how can we suffer either our heads or our hearts to be troubled about any thing upon earth, but only how to get to heaven ? What if we should be deprived of all our temporal enjoyments, what need we be troubled, when we have mansions above ready furnished to our

hands, with all the good things we can desire? What if it be difficult to get a place there? we have an almighty harbinger gone before to prepare one for us. What if we have never so many enemies, yea, what if all the men upon earth, and all the devils in hell, should conspire to ruin us? what need we be troubled at that, when we have a sure friend in heaven, who can abate their pride, assuage their malice, confound their devices, and make them against their wills do us good by all they design against us? What if we have nobody here below that minds or matters what becomes of us? what need we be troubled at that, when we have an infinitely wise, and powerful, and good, and merciful Saviour above, continually taking care of us, and providing all things necessary for us, and one who can aid and assist us in all conditions, upon all occasions whatsoever: if we be in want he can supply us, if in danger he can deliver us, if in pain he can ease us, if in disgrace he can bring us to honour, if we be accused he can acquit us, if sorrowful he can comfort us, if weak he can strengthen us, if sick he can heal us, if dying he can receive us to himself? Can, did I say? yea and will too, if we do but obey and trust in him as we ought.

Let us not therefore trouble our heads any more about any thing, but how to serve our great Lord and Master Christ, by doing all such good works as he hath set us, and putting our whole trust and confidence only on him, both for God's assistance of us in the doing them, and for his acceptance of them when they are done. Let us but constantly do this, and then we may be sure that he will guide, assist, and bless us through the whole course of our lives, and at length bring us to that blessed place which he hath prepared for us in his Father's house, that we may always live with him who liveth and reigneth with the Father and the Holy Ghost, world without end.

SERMON LXXVII.

A WHITSUN SERMON.

ACTS ii. 1, 2.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place ; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, &c.

AS in the creation of the world from nothing, so also in the redemption of mankind from sin, all the three persons in the Godhead, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, did jointly concur, every one contributing towards it according to their several ways of working ; for man by his fall into sin being both guilty of it, and defiled with it, God the Father sent his Son to expiate his guilt, and both Father and Son send the Spirit to cleanse him from the filth of sin, and to restore him to purity and holiness again ; for which ends the Son came down to die for him, and the Spirit to live within him ; and though there was no visible appearance of either of them till many years after the beginning of the world, yet the power and efficacy of either's undertaking commenced from the first promise which was made to man immediately after his fall, Gen. iii. 15. For from that time Christ was looked upon as slain for the sins of men, and the Holy Ghost thereupon moved upon their hearts to turn them from darkness unto light, and from the power of satan unto God, by which means the patriarchs of old, and many that lived long before Christ came into the world, had their sins pardoned, their persons accepted,

and their hearts purified, and by consequence are now in heaven.

But when the fulness of time prescribed by the Father was come, the second Person came down from heaven, and having clothed himself with flesh, conversed several years in our own nature with men on earth ; but all the while that he was here, the Spirit came not any more than it had done before, neither could come until himself was gone, John vii. 39. From whence we may observe, that the Spirit's coming from heaven to earth depended upon the Son's return from earth to heaven, being as it were part of the purchase that he made by his death for us ; so that had not the first died to free us from our guilt, and justify our persons, neither would the Spirit have come to cleanse us from our lusts, and sanctify our natures ; but when by his death he had purchased both pardon and grace, both justification and sanctification for us, then he had power afterwards to send the Spirit, who by his grace might reconcile us to God, as himself by his death had reconciled God to us ; and therefore he said, that *when he was gone he would send the Comforter*, that is, the Spirit, John xvi. 7. Where also it is observable the Spirit is called *παράκλητος*, properly the advocate, as it is rightly rendered of our Saviour, 1 John ii. 1. For indeed as Christ is our advocate in heaven, so is the Spirit God's advocate upon earth ; Christ there pleads with God for us, the Spirit here pleads with us for God ; yea, so that our Saviour tells us, he shall *convince the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment*, John xvi. 8. Thus therefore our Saviour, to comfort his disciples, promised them several times before he died, that when he was gone he would send them another Comforter or Advocate in his room. *even the Spirit of God himself*, John xiv. 16, 26. xv. 26. Neither did he promise it only before his passion, but after his resurrection too, Luke xxiv. 49. and therefore bids them wait at Jerusalem for it, Acts i. 4. But why at Jerusalem ? that so the

Spirit might find them where he left them, and that being endowed with power from above, they might there begin to proclaim the Gospel, where Christ had sealed it with his own blood; and that the ancient prophecy also might be fulfilled, *Out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of God from Jerusalem*, Isa. ii. 3. Neither doth he only appoint them the place where they should expect the coming of the Spirit, but assures them too, that it should not be many days before he came, Acts i. 5. He would not send him too soon, that they might be more desirous of him, and better prepared to receive him; but he would not stay too long, lest they should suspect either his power or faithfulness, in not performing what he had so often promised; and therefore he tells them before, that it should be some days, but not many, before he came; some, that their desires might be stronger after the fulfilling of the promise; not many, lest their faith should grow weaker in him that made it, who made it also and fulfilled it on purpose that their faith might be confirmed in him.

Our Saviour therefore having thus made this promise immediately before his ascension, his disciples could not but wait at Jerusalem for the fulfilling of it. And verily it was not many days before it was fulfilled, exactly according to our Saviour's promise and prediction; for he was crucified at the passover, and rose again the third day, the day from whence the Jews began to reckon their fifty days to the feast of Pentecost. After he was risen he continued forty days upon earth, before he ascended up to heaven, Acts i. 3. So that as the Israelites, after they had eaten the first paschal lamb, were forty years in the wilderness before they got to the land of Canaan; so our Saviour, the true passover, after he was slain and raised again, continued forty days in the wilderness of this world, before he went to heaven, the true land of Canaan: and it was but immediately before his ascension that he made this promise, and therefore there were but ten days betwixt the making and the

accomplishing of it, for there were but fifty days in all from the resurrection to the Pentecost ; forty were expired at his ascension, and therefore there were but ten remaining to the Pentecost, when the Spirit came down, according to the relation which St. Luke hath made of it in my text ; *and when the day of Pentecost was fully come, &c.*

In which words is briefly contained whatsoever is necessary to be known, concerning the great mystery of the Holy Ghost's coming down to reside with men ; and therefore that you may fully understand them, I shall endeavour to explain them clearly unto you, as they lie in order.

First, therefore, here is the time when he came down, *when the day of Pentecost was fully come* ; for the opening whereof we shall consider,

I. What this day of Pentecost was.

II. Why he came upon this day.

First, therefore, for our better understanding what this day of Pentecost was, we must know that the Jews were commanded by God himself to observe three feasts every year, which they call *דגלים*, because all men, where-soever they were, were bound to come on foot to them, and they were the feast of the passover, the feast of weeks, and the feast of tabernacles. The feast of tabernacles was kept in autumn, on the fifteenth day of their month Tisri, which answers partly to our September. The feast of the passover was kept on the fifteenth day of their first month Abib, or Nisan ; for upon the fourteenth day of the same month the passover was slain, and the fifteenth day was the feast of the passover, or of unleavened bread. Now from the next day after the feast of the unleavened bread, they were to reckon seven weeks, which make forty-nine days, and the next day after, which was the fiftieth day, was their other great feast, which, because it was reckoned by weeks, was called *דג שבועות*, the feast of weeks, and it being kept upon the fiftieth day from the morrow after the feast of unleavened bread, it

was therefore called πεντηκοστή ἡμέρα, the fiftieth day, and simply πεντηκοστή, the Pentecost, Lev. xxiii. 15, 16.

Upon this day therefore it was that the Holy Ghost came down to enlighten and better this world, by enabling the apostles to preach, and others to believe and obey the Gospel; and hence it is that it hath always been kept with as much devotion by Christians, as ever it was by the Jews; not because Moses commanded it, but because the Holy Ghost hath sanctified it; and therefore in ancient times this was one of the principal days of baptism, and the persons baptized were always clothed with white; hence, I suppose, our English name of it had its first original; as also the Greek *κριακή λαμπρά*, the bright Sun-day; and questionless never was day so bright, so glorious as this, wherein the glorious light of heaven itself, the Holy Ghost, came down to visit and enlighten our dark horizon.

Secondly, why did the Holy Ghost make choice of this day wherein to manifest himself to the world? One reason may be, because the law was given on mount Sinai fifty days after the paschal lamb, or the first passover, was slain; for from the fourteenth day of the first month, when the lamb was slain, to the third day of the third month, when the law was given, Exod. xix. were just fifty days: hence therefore, as St. Augustine also long ago observed, the Spirit came down fifty days after Christ the true passover was slain, to enable us to keep that law which was then promulgated on mount Sinai, and to write it on the tables of our hearts, which was then written only on tables of stone.

Another reason may be, because then there was to be a greater concourse of people, which might be both witnesses of, and converted by, his coming then; for all Jews from all parts were then obliged by their law to present themselves before the Lord in the temple at Jerusalem; and that many did so at that time is plain from what follows in that very chapter, Acts ii. 5. This therefore seemed to be the fittest time for the Spirit

to come down so visibly amongst them, that some of all parts of the world might be eye-witnesses of it, and not only be themselves convinced by so great a miracle of the truth of the Gospel confirmed by it, but also carry the news of it to their several countries all the world over, by which means also all that had seen Christ crucified at the passover, might see the Spirit come down at Pentecost.

There is still another thing much to be observed in the day whereon the Holy Ghost vouchsafed to descend to us poor mortals upon earth; and that is, that the day of Pentecost that year happened to be the first day of the week, or Sunday; as not only the ancient fathers asserted, but reason itself concludes to be most certain; for the Pentecost, or fifty days, must be reckoned from the morrow after the feast of unleavened bread, on which day our Saviour rose; but it is plain from Scripture that he rose the first day of the week; now if, beginning at the first day, we reckon seven weeks complete, that is, forty-nine days, the fiftieth day must necessarily follow to be the first day of the week again. What cause have we then to reverence and celebrate this day with all solemnity and devotion imaginable, seeing the whole work of our salvation was accomplished on it? for on it our blessed Saviour rose from the earth to justify our persons, and on it the Holy Ghost came down from heaven to sanctify our natures: so that as the Father had sanctified the seventh day of the week, to be kept holy from the beginning of the world to that time, so both Son and Spirit have sanctified the first day of the week, to be kept holy from that time to the end of the world. No wonder therefore that Christians in all ages have been so strict in keeping of this day holy. The greatest wonder is, that we should dare to profess ourselves to be Christians, and yet profane it.

2. To whom was it that he first appeared? If we look into the foregoing chapter, i. 26. we may be apt to think that it was only the twelve apostles who had this

honour conferred upon them, as to have the Holy Ghost so visibly come down amongst them ; but it is very probable, that it was not only the twelve apostles, but the hundred and twenty disciples, mentioned chap. i. 15. by whom also Matthias was chosen into the number of the apostles in the room of Judas, who had forfeited his apostleship by betraying his Master, and prevented his repentance by hanging himself. For that all the hundred and twenty were then present, consisting of men and women, old and young together, even all that as yet believed in Christ, the apostle Peter intimates, in quoting for their defence the prophecy of Joel, Acts ii. 16, 17, 18. and is plain also from ver. 14, 15. where Pèter, standing up with the eleven, said, that *those who spake so much with other tongues were not drunken ;* which therefore must needs be distinct from the twelve apostles that spake it of them.

3. Where were the disciples when the Spirit came to them? Why, they were all with one accord in one place ; they were all assembled together, where we may consider the manner and end of their present assembling.

1. For the manner it is said, that they were all with one accord in one place ; with one accord, that is, with one heart, one mind, and one soul ; they were not some of one opinion, and some of another, neither were there any strifes or contentions, nor any animosities or heart-burnings, one against another ; no pride or conceitedness, but rather every one accounted others better than himself, contending about nothing but which should be the least contentious among them ; but as all their hearts were united to God, so were they to one another ; so that there seemed to be but one soul amongst them all ; and therefore also they did not only meet together with one accord, but in one place too. One was not in one place, and another in another, but as they had all one heart, so they were all in one place.

As for the end why they met thus with one accord in

one place ; certainly it could be upon no bad design : they came not hither to plot treason, or sow sedition ; they came not to inveigh against their governors, or to vent their malice against their neighbours ; neither came they to consult about the world, nor to lay their heads together how to advance their credits or estates ; much less came they hither to indulge their senses with carnal pleasures, or to spend their time in rioting and drunkenness. If they had come upon these, or such like designs as these are, they would have been altogether incapable, as well as unworthy to receive so great a blessing as was then vouchsafed unto them ; neither could they have expected the Spirit, but rather the judgments of God to have come down upon them. There might indeed have come a sound from heaven, not such a one as to rejoice their souls, but rather to make their ears to tingle, and their hearts to tremble. There might have been a mighty rushing wind, but not to fill their house with glory where they sat, but rather to throw it down upon their heads ; not cloven tongues, but feet might have appeared unto them, and such a fire have set upon them as might consume both their souls and bodies ; and so instead of speaking with other tongues, have lost their own, and have been all speechless.

The event therefore shews what they were met about in general, even to perform that worship and homage to Almighty God, which he required of them ; and whilst they were paying their devotions to him, Christ fulfilled his promise unto them, in pouring forth his Spirit upon them. But what particular acts of devotion they now did, we may gather from what they used to do when met together at other times.

1. They never met, but still they prayed, not so carelessly and perfunctorily as we are too apt to do, but with all their might and mind, or, if you will, with one heart and mind, with one accord, Acts i. 14. But what kind of prayers they were wont to perform to God, what hu-

mility, faith, and sincerity they expressed in them, we may easily gather from Acts iv 24, 25, 30. Thus when they met they used to join their forces together to take heaven, as it were, by violence, that no real evil might fall upon them, no real good be wanting to them. And it is more than probable, that at this time especially they were big with the expectation of the promise which Christ had made them, and therefore with one accord were praying, that it might be now fulfilled to them, which accordingly was done, and that not only at this, but at other times, as Acts iv. 31. From whence we may observe, that whilst they were sending up their spirits unto God, God sent down his Spirit unto them ; and, by consequence, that the best way for us to obtain any mercy from God, is still to ask it of him, God having not only promised, but his saints experienced, that what they ask faithfully, they still obtain effectually

2. They were wont to have the word of God preached or expounded to them, as we read St. Paul did, Acts xx. 7

3. But the great thing they did, whensoever they met together, was to receive the sacrament ; so that their coming together was still upon this account, Acts xx. 7 where, by breaking of bread, we are to understand the sacrament, as also wheresoever it occurs in the New Testament, because the principal thing in the sacrament, even the death of Christ, is signified by breaking of the bread ; and therefore, saith the apostle, *the bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ ?* 1 Cor. x. 16. Neither did they content themselves with receiving the sacrament now and then, but it was their daily, their continual employment, Acts ii. 42, 46. And therefore we cannot doubt but that on the day of Pentecost, when they met together, they did that which was the work of every day, even administer and receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper And it is very observable, that when our Saviour, after his resurrection, met with two of his disciples as they were going to

Emmaus, though they knew him not before, yet when, according to his own institution, he had taken bread, and blessed it, and broken it, and given it to them, *their eyes were presently opened, so that they knew him*, Luke xxiv. 30, 35. Questionless he could have manifested himself to them many other ways besides this ; but this he did to shew, that the principal way to come to the right knowledge of him is by breaking of bread, by frequent beholding him mystically crucified in the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

Now as Christ discovered himself to two of them, so it seems he gave his Spirit to all his disciples, whilst they were breaking of bread ; for, seeing they never omitted this sacrament, much less would they omit it now, upon the day of Pentecost, when they were all together with one accord, in one place, at which time *there came a sound from heaven, &c.* give me leave to apply what hath been already spoken of concerning the circumstances preceding the descent of the Holy Ghost ; and here give me leave to deal plainly with you ; we have been this day commemorating that blessed time, when Christ, being himself gone up from earth to heaven, sent down his Spirit from heaven to earth ; we have seen also what the disciples were doing when the Spirit came unto them, even the same things that you and I are now here met about ; and, amongst other things, they were doing that which you and I are now to do, even the receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper.

And verily, I hope that there is none of you but have so considered what I suggested to you the last Lord's day, concerning the necessity of receiving this sacrament, that you are all prepared for it, being both ashamed and afraid to omit it any longer, as heretofore many of you have done ; though I cannot but oftentimes wonder with myself, with what face any one can go out of the congregation when the sacrament of the Lord's supper is to be administered, as if it was not as necessary for us

to receive the sacrament, as it is to hear a sermon : but surely such of you never allow yourselves time to think, that yourselves are sinners, and Christ your only Saviour. For if you did but consider that aright, you would need no other arguments to persuade you to receive that sacrament, which himself hath ordained to testify your faith in him, and partake of the benefits of his death and passion. I dare say, if you had all places of trust, or offices of never so little value, under his Majesty, which by the late act you could not hold without taking the sacrament, there is not a man of you but would receive it presently. Judge therefore in your own consciences, whether it be not a sad, a dismal thing, that you should do that for a little pelf, which neither Christ's command, nor the eternal concerns of your own immortal souls, can bring you to.

But I cannot, I dare not but hope better things of you ; and therefore trusting in the living God, that he hath both excited and enabled you to prepare yourselves for this blessed ordinance, let us all address ourselves unto it ; and who knows but Christ may manifest himself to us, as he did to the two disciples, in breaking of bread ? Who knows but the Holy Ghost himself may come down, as he did in my text, whilst we are receiving of the sacrament, and fill our hearts with all true grace and virtue ? This I am sure of, that none of us shall receive it aright, but we shall also receive unspeakable benefit and comfort from it ; which that we may do, let us bid the world adieu, and call in for all our scattered affections, and present them before him that made them. Let us soar aloft for a while, and in our aspiring thoughts contemplate nought but Christ. Let us fix the eye of our faith so, that we may look through the signs to the things signified ; that so, together with the bread and wine, we may receive Christ with all the benefits of his death and passion, and so may return home with our sins pardoned, our lusts subdued, our

minds enlightened, our natures cleansed, and our hearts rejoicing in God our Saviour.

We have seen the time when the persons to whom, and the duties wherein, the Holy Ghost first made his visible appearance upon earth. We are now to consider the manner and the effects of it; for the opening whereof we must know, that though he came of his own accord, yet he was sent also by the Son, not only as he proceeds from him as well as from the Father, but also upon the account of his death, whereby, he having redeemed us from sin, he had right and power to send his Spirit to make us holy. And therefore the Spirit's descent to earth was not only the consequent, but the effect too of Christ's ascent to heaven. For as the ancient emperors, after they had conquered their stubborn enemies, were wont to ride in triumph over them, and towards the end of their triumphant shews to scatter gifts and largesses amongst their subjects and spectators; so here our blessed Lord had a sharp encounter with the two great and potent enemies of mankind, sin and death: these he fought upon the cross, though both his hands and feet were tied, yea, nailed to it. The battle continued long, till sin at length gave Christ so great a blow, that it struck him down; but he would not fall alone, but plucked down both sin and satan along with him: and then rising again at his resurrection, he got above them both, gave them their mortal wound, and so obtained a most signal victory over them; in token whereof he afterwards rode triumphantly into heaven, a cloud being his triumphant chariot, and the whole host of heaven his attendants, who all congratulated the conquest he had won over the enemies of that nature he had assumed, and welcomed his safe return into his Father's kingdom. And the more to set out his triumph, and manifest the victory he had got, he soon distributed his gifts amongst his new-bought subjects upon earth, as both the psalmist and apostle long ago observed, saying

of him, that when he *ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men*, Psal. lxxviii. 18. Ephes. iv 8. And as there never was so great a victory got as our Saviour got, so never did conqueror give such gifts as he gave. Other princes used to adorn their triumphs with scattering silver or gold, and such like trash amongst their people. But such gifts as these were too mean, too low for so great a Conqueror, and so mighty a Prince, to give upon such an occasion as this was ; for this being the greatest victory that ever was or ever can be gotten, it was rather to be signalized with the greatest gifts that ever were or ever can be given. And so verily it was ; for our Saviour was no sooner got into his kingdom, but he presently sends down his Spirit to distribute all his gifts and graces amongst his beloved subjects upon earth. The manner whereof is here described by the evangelist St. Luke, who hath left it upon record on purpose for our comfort and admonition ; *for there came*, saith he, *a sound from heaven*, &c.

Where we may observe first in general, that the Spirit came, and not in a secret and invisible way, as he might, but as openly and visibly as he could. It is true, if he would, he might have insinuated himself, and have instilled all his gifts and graces into the hearts and souls of the disciples, without any sign or external appearance whatsoever. so that neither others, nor themselves, at first could have taken any notice of it. But it pleased himself to come, and the Son to send him in more state than so, and in such a public and open manner as he did, upon these accounts.

1 That the disciples might take particular notice of Christ's fidelity to them, in performing that promise which he made them before he had departed from them : he had told them that he would send the Spirit to them, and therefore they could not but expect it ; but if it had come in that clandestine manner unto them, as it useth to go to others, they would not have

had that signal testimony of Christ's fulfilling his promise to them, which was necessary to the confirming of their faith in him, neither would they have been affected so much with the performance of it, as afterwards they were.

2. It came in this visible manner to them, that others might be convinced, that what the disciples taught, though it might seem both new and strange to them that heard it, or to us that hear of it, yet it proceeded not from enthusiasm or fanaticism, or a vain and false pretence to divine revelation, but that it was really infused into them by God himself, seeing the Holy Ghost came down so visibly, so apparently upon them.

3. The Spirit, who hitherto came *incognito* into true believers, now made his public entrance into this lower world, to shew that himself was concerned in man's salvation as well as the Father and the Son: the Father he had openly engaged himself by promise to send his Son to be our Saviour; the Son as openly appeared upon the stage of this world in our very natures, wherein he died too in the view of all that stood by; and therefore the Holy Ghost, that he also might openly manifest his concurrence to our salvation, chose to come in this open and public manner, that all there present might behold it, and that we might all admire at the infinite love and mercy of the eternal God in man's redemption, seeing all the persons in the sacred Trinity so much concerned themselves in the offering of it.

Now as for the particular ways whereby the Holy Ghost manifested his coming to the disciples, I shall endeavour to explain them in the order that they are here set down.

First, therefore, *there came a sound from heaven, as of a mighty rushing wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting*; it was not therefore a real wind, but only the sound, as if it had been of a mighty rushing wind. There was a sound to strike terror into them, and a sound as of a mighty wind to shew what

he would do in and by them, even turn all things upside down, as he doth wheresoever he comes: if he comes but into a private heart, how does it bear down all before it? what changes and alterations doth it soon make in it? how doth it shift and turn every thing upside down? making it love what it before hated, and hate what before it loved; admire what before it scorned, and scorn what before it admired; desire what before it abhorred, and abhor what before it desired.

But if we consider what he did when he came into the world at this time, his coming might well be compared to a mighty rushing wind indeed, for nothing was able to stand before it; the highest mountains, even the proudest spirits, were humbled by it; the rocks were rent, and the hardest and stoutest hearts soon trembled and shook before it; idolatry and superstition, which had taken such deep root in the hearts of men, were plucked up by the roots, and thrown down by it; the strongest and stateliest fabrics in the world, the temples, were not able to withstand it, yea, the very gods themselves were forced to stoop unto it; Saturn and Apollo, yea, and Jupiter himself, with the rest of the feigned deities, all fell down before it, to give way to a crucified Christ; their oracles were soon struck dumb, so soon as the Spirit began to speak, and to enable the apostles to preach the Gospel; so fitly was the Spirit ushered into the world with a sound as of a mighty rushing wind, seeing that the strongest fortresses that satan had erected him in the world, no, nor the very gates of hell, were able to stand up against it.

2. *There appeared to them cloven tongues.* The Spirit first presented himself to the ears, and then to the eyes of the disciples. First they heard a sound that gave them warning of the approaching wonder, and then they see the sight, such a one as never was before, nor ever shall be again; for there appeared to them cloven tongues, tongues divided into as many parts as there were languages in the universal world, signifying that

the apostles' tongues should be so cloven as to be able to speak plainly and distinctly whatsoever language was spoken upon the face of the earth ; neither were they only cloven tongues, but *like as of fire*, to shew how quick, how piercing, how forcible their words should be, that they should not only speak to the ears, but to the very hearts of men, their words like fire, insinuating themselves into every corner of their hearts that heard them, burning up the briars and thorns, consuming all the lusts and corruptions they should meet withal, and so cleanse, so purify and refine their souls, that they should be fit habitacles for God himself to dwell in.

Thus therefore the cloven tongues, like as of fire, appeared to them, and then it follows, *and it sat upon them* ; that is, the Holy Ghost sat upon each of them ; it did not leap from one to another, but sat severally upon each of them, high or low, rich or poor, yea, old or young, without any distinction whatsoever.

But, though it sat awhile, it did not sit long upon each of them, but sunk down into them, for they were presently all filled with the Holy Ghost, even as the house before had been with the sound as of a rushing mighty wind : thus they were full of the Holy Ghost ; an expression very usual in Scripture, and no less observable, for none is ever said to be full of an angel, or full of any creature, but only full of the Holy Ghost, who by consequence must needs be no creature, but the infinite God himself, otherwise he could never have filled the souls of men, which are so vast and capacious, that no one, no, nor all the creatures in the world, can ever fill them.

Having thus explained the manner of the Holy Ghost's coming down upon the disciples, we are in the next place to consider the effects, which were either immediate, such as shewed themselves at the same time, or else such as appeared afterwards.

The first and most immediate effects of all were seen upon the apostles, upon whom the Spirit was no sooner

come, but, according to the appearance which they had seen, their tongues were immediately cloven, they were all expert linguists; *for they began*, saith the text, *to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance*. And what those other tongues were we may see, ver. 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11 Where we must observe, that these were all Jews, come from these several parts of the world to worship in the temple at Jerusalem, upon the feast of Pentecost, as the Mosaic law enjoined. And therefore, ver. 5. they are said to be Jews dwelling, κατοικοῦντες, sojourning rather, at Jerusalem, and to be εὐλαβεῖς, devout men, because they came thither upon a righteous account; so that it is a great mistake for any one to think they were Gentiles.

But then you will say, how come the Jews to be so dispersed all the world over, as is here intimated they were; for that we must know, that of the twelve tribes of Israel, ten were carried captive by Salmanassar king of Assyria, and placed in Hala and Habor, by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes, 2 Kings xvii. 6. few of which ever returned again, though the more devout amongst them made shift sometimes to come to Jerusalem to perform their devotions there; and these are they which are called Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, or Persians of the province of Elymais. The two other tribes of Judah and Benjamin were afterwards carried by Nebuchadnezzar to Babylon, and placed in the cities and countries thereabout, where a great part of them stayed, though many returned in the reign of Cyrus to Jerusalem again; and these were they which are here called dwellers in Mesopotamia and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia. Besides these two dispersions of the Jews beyond the river Euphrates by Salmanasser and Nebuchadnezzar, Ptolomæus Lagi, one of the Greek kings reigning in Egypt, as Josephus himself tells us, did afterwards take Jerusalem by surprise, and carried many of the inhabitants into Egypt, and planted them in Alexandria, and other places there-

abouts. These, though they continued Jews, and observed the Mosaic rites as well as they could, yet being subject to the Grecian empire, they spake the Greek tongue, and in their synagogues used the Greek translation of the Bible, or the Septuagint made in Egypt, and therefore are called Grecians or Hellenists, Acts vi. 1. These therefore are they which are here said to dwell in Egypt, and in the parts of Lybia about Cyrene, ver. 10. And they being thus scattered abroad into so many countries, no wonder that at length we find some of them at Rome too, others amongst the Cretes and Arabians, yea and in every nation of the known world, ver. 5

The dispersed Jews therefore coming from these remote parts, and meeting at Jerusalem, they there find a company of illiterate men, that knew by nature no more than their mother-tongue, speaking the several languages of every one, from what places soever he came, so that they were able on a sudden to entertain or discourse with any of them in their own proper and native language; with the Grecians in Greek, with the Arabians in Arabic, and with the Romans in Latin; such a miracle as was never heard of before; but there were eye and ear-witnesses of it, whose devotion at this time had brought them to Jerusalem: many whereof found also another wonderful effect of the Spirit's coming down upon the disciples, for from the disciples it diffused itself into them too; for, as the disciples' tongues, so their hearts were rent; for St. Peter had no sooner spoke a few words to them, but presently they were pricked at their hearts, and cried out, *Men and brethren, what shall we do?* Acts ii. 37 insomuch, that on that one day there were no less than three thousand souls converted and added to the church, ver. 41. Oh glorious effect of the coming of the Holy Ghost! How happy were they who came from the remotest parts of the world to perform their devotions in the temple of Jerusalem upon the feast of Pentecost? they were witnesses

of the greatest miracle that was ever acted, and partakers of the greatest blessing that could be desired; whereas if they had stayed at home, as the rest of their brethren did, they had neither seen the one, nor enjoyed the other.

Besides those immediate effects which the coming of the Spirit had upon the spot, and at the very place and time of his appearance, there are many others which you and I should be both mindful of, and thankful for; I shall only mention such as our Saviour promised should be, and the event testified that they really were, the effects of his coming.

1. By the virtue and assistance of the Spirit thus come upon them, the apostles and disciples were enabled to write the Gospels, and to transmit to posterity whatsoever was needful to be known of what our Saviour did or said when he was upon earth; for it is certain that none of the Gospels were written till some time after our Saviour's ascension: but then you will say, how could the Evangelists remember the several passages of our Saviour's life, so as to deliver them so exactly unto us? especially, how could they remember the long sermon that he made upon the mount, and before his passion, so as to repeat it *verbatim*, word for word, some years after, as it is most certain St. John did in his Gospel? Questionless it was only by the Spirit of God calling to their minds whatsoever our Saviour said to them, which it was necessary that they should hand down to us, for so our Saviour expressly promised them before his death, John xiv. 26. And therefore how much cause have we to celebrate this day with joy and thankfulness to the eternal God, for what was done upon it, forasmuch as we are to ascribe unto the mercy and miracle of this day, that we have any infallible records of what our Saviour did or said; that we have any Gospels which we may confide in; and that all those excellent and divine sermons, discourses, and expressions, which our Saviour uttered, are not buried in oblivion. So that do

we certainly know that there was such a person once as Christ upon earth? do we know how he was born, and how bred up? do we know what he did, and what he suffered? do we know how he died, and rose again? do we know those divine truths he taught, and those excellent laws that he prescribed? do we know how he ascended up to heaven, and afterwards sent down his Spirit unto earth? why it is to this the last thing he did, that we must ascribe the knowledge both of itself and all things else concerning him; so that had the Spirit never come down to earth, be sure we should never have gone up to heaven, for we had never known the way thither, but had still continued in darkness and infidelity, yea in heathenism and idolatry itself; and therefore if we be Christians, and desire to continue so, we must needs bless God for the mercies of this day, without which we had never known what Christianity had been.

Especially considering, that it was by the Spirit only thus coming upon them that the apostles were directed to all such truths as were necessary to be known, in order to our Saviour's promise, John xvi. 13. So that the writing not only of the Gospels, but of all the other parts of the New Testament, depended upon the coming of the Holy Ghost; to which also we are obliged for the propagating as well as for the writing of the Gospel: for the fulfilling of this promise, which Christ had made them, did not only embolden the apostles, but enable them too to preach the Gospel, maugre all the opposition which was made against it; yea, and to work miracles for the confirmation of it, and at last to seal it with their own blood. For it was by the Holy Ghost alone that they were empowered to do so, as our Saviour himself foretold them immediately before he parted with them, Luke xxiv. 49.

Thus have I endeavoured to give you some small light into the manner and effects of the first visible appearance that the apostles, after our Saviour's ascension, had of the Holy Ghost descending upon them. Whe-

ther your affections have been moved suitably to what you have heard, or whether you have been moved at all, I leave that to God and your own consciences. This I am sure of, that if you have considered all along what we have been discoursing of, you could not but find work enough for all the powers of your souls to be employed, which certainly ought to have put forth and exercised themselves after the same manner, as if we had really seen as well as heard of the Spirit's coming down upon the disciples. For suppose that, instead of hearing of, we should see this very sight again represented before our eyes; and now that we are met upon the day of Pentecost, I hope with one accord, and in one place, suppose that whilst I am speaking there should suddenly come a sound, as of a rushing mighty wind, and fill the place where we now are; and that there should appear unto us cloven tongues, like as of fire, and set upon each of us, and so we should all be filled with the Holy Ghost, and begin to speak with other tongues, so that in the twinkling of an eye, never an one of us, man, woman, or child, but should be able to discourse exactly in Greek or Hebrew, Chaldee or Syriac, Turkish or Arabic, Persian or Ethiopic, Samaritan or Sclavonic, yea any language that is spoken upon the face of the earth; would not our hair stand an end, and our whole souls be struck into horror and amazement at it? why the same effect that the sight would, the hearing of this miracle ought to have upon us; so that we would all stand as it were in amaze, astonished that God himself, that inhabits eternity, should thus come down to dwell with men, with creeping, crawling dust and ashes upon earth. *Oh, what is man, that thou art mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou shouldest visit him?*

But though the disciples then present were the only persons that saw this blessed sight, yet we may partake of the benefits of it as well as they; for in that our blessed Lord then sent down his Spirit upon his disci-

ples in so visible a manner, he therefore assures us, that his Spirit shall never be wanting to such as are his true disciples ; but if we be his true disciples indeed, we shall have the same Spirit come down on us as they had, and be endued with as great power as they were, even to work miracles, though not upon others, yet upon ourselves. I cannot say that we shall be able to give eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, health to the sick, or life to the dying, with a word speaking, as the apostles ; yet we, that were born spiritually blind, shall have our eyes so opened, as to see all things that belong to our eternal estate ; we, that before could not go one step in the ways of God without stumbling, shall be able to walk in the commandments of God blameless. We, who before were distempered in our whole man, shall have all the faculties of our souls, and members of our bodies restored to a sound frame and constitution ; yea, we, who before were dead in trespasses and sins, shall be quickened unto newness of life ; which questionless are as great miracles as ever were or ever can be wrought, and which none else but the Spirit of God himself can do.

But, that the Spirit may come down on us as it hath done on them, our spirits must be still rising up to heaven, endeavouring to meet him as it were half way, so as still to be praying for it, and confiding in our Saviour's words, Luke xi. 13. Especially, when we meet to perform our devotions unto God, we are to expect that he will perform his promise unto us, as I hope he hath done to many of us already, who, having met together on the day of Pentecost, as the disciples did, have been made partakers of the same Spirit as they were, which if we are, how happy shall we be. For if once the Spirit moves upon the face of our souls, he will soon dispel all clouds and mists, and clear up our apprehensions of the chiefest good ; he will enlighten our dark minds, and rectify our crooked wills, inform our erring judgments, and reform our sinful lives ; he will awaken

our sleepy consciences, and regulate our inordinate passions ; he will sanctify our seeming griefs, and refine our real joys ; he will soften our hard hearts, and humble our proud spirits ; he will weaken our strong sins, and strengthen our weak graces ; in a word, he will make us as much averse from sin, and inclined to holiness, as we have heretofore been averse from holiness, and inclined to sin ; and so, being holy by the Spirit in all manner of conversation here, we need not fear but we shall be happy through Christ in all manner of perfection hereafter.

END OF VOL. III.

